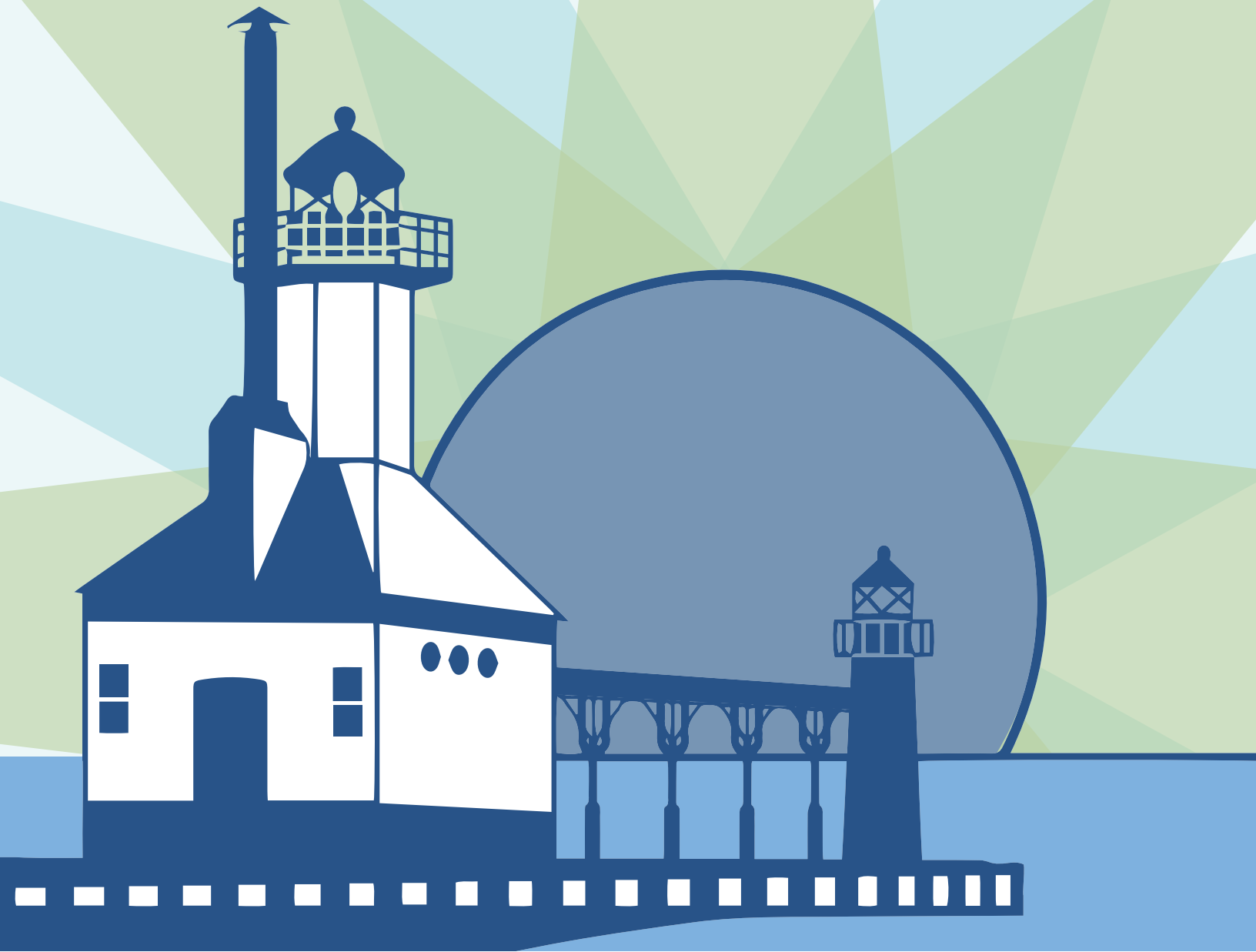


ST. JOSEPH DOWNTOWN VISION MASTER PLAN



ADOPTED JANUARY 27, 2020



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Situated atop the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan, Downtown St. Joseph is a charming, attractive, and active mixed-use district at the core of the City of St. Joseph, functioning as the cultural and social heart of the community. Located where the St. Joseph and Paw Paw Rivers converge and flow into Lake Michigan, Downtown St. Joseph is a major regional destination in Southwest Michigan for recreation and tourism. This includes major attractions like Silver Beach, the St. Joseph Lighthouse, the Silver Beach Carousel, Whirlpool Compass Fountain, Krasl Art Center, and Curious Kids' Museum. These attractions are further complimented by a variety of retail, dining, and entertainment options in a beautiful, pedestrian-friendly environment, primarily along State Street. Together, these and other attractions and amenities make Downtown St. Joseph a popular destination.

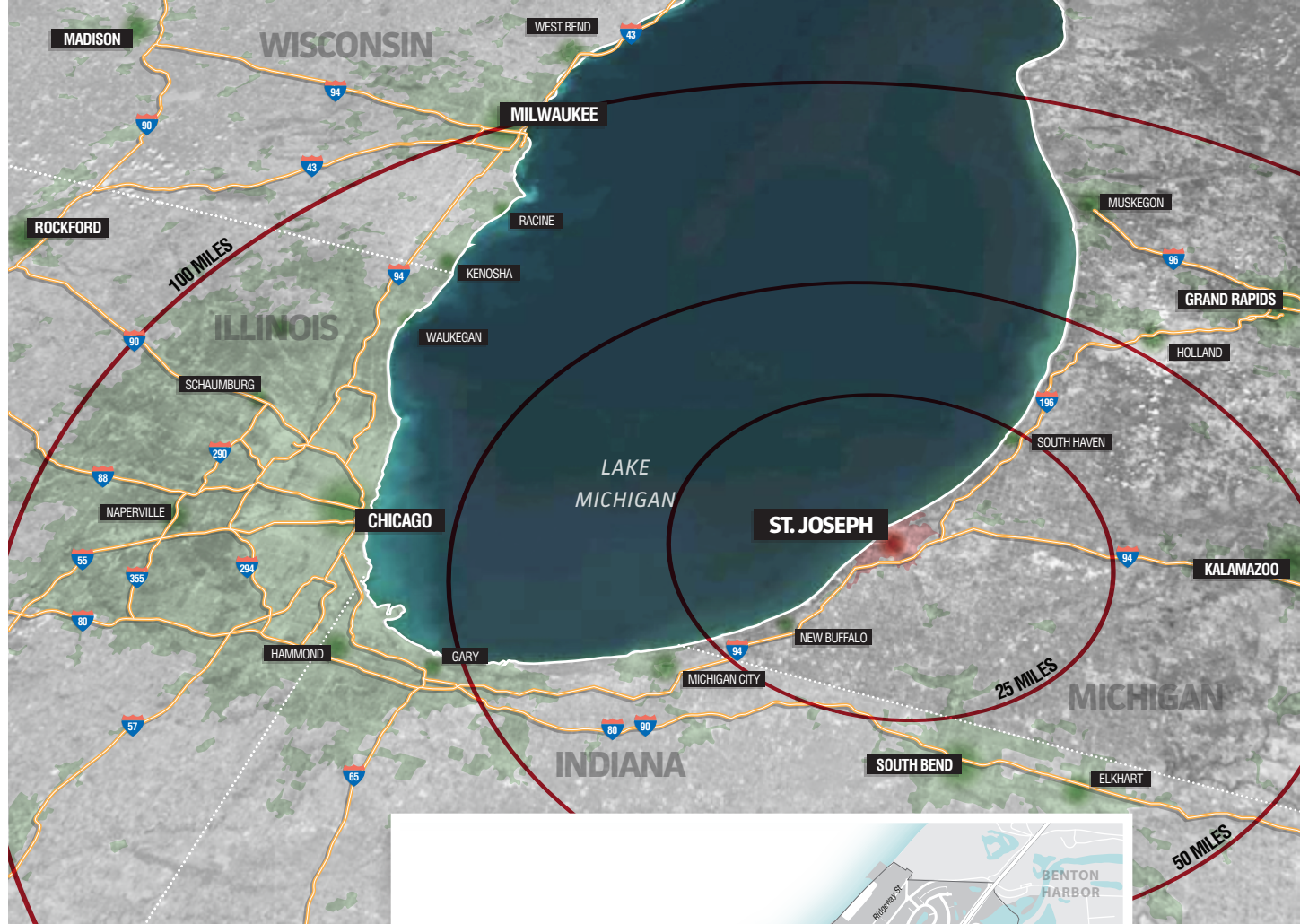
Although busiest during the summer months, St. Joseph's Downtown remains active year-round as an employment center, cultural center, the county seat for Berrien County, and the center of civic activity within the community. Further, Downtown hosts numerous events and festivals throughout the year, offering residents and visitors unique experiences in a social setting. This makes Downtown more than just a seasonal tourist destination, but also a community gathering space providing a variety of year-round recreation, dining, shopping, entertainment, cultural, and civic experiences for the entire community and beyond.

Downtown St. Joseph is an attractive, lively, and successful urban center, serving as the cultural, civic, and entertainment hub of the City. Maintaining and further enhancing the quality of this area requires a continuous dedication to preserving and enhancing what makes Downtown St. Joseph great. Understanding this challenge, the City developed St. Joseph Downtown Vision, a downtown master plan intended to address specific issues related to land use and development, parking and transportation, pedestrian & bicycle mobility, urban design and character, and entertainment and activity. Overall, the St. Joseph Downtown Vision master plan establishes a vision for the future of Downtown and identifies the recommendations and policies to make it a reality.

Purpose of the Downtown Vision Master Plan

The St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan is the City's official plan and policy guide for Downtown St. Joseph. It provides a decision-making framework for City staff, elected and appointed officials, residents, business owners, and community stakeholders.

The Plan presents a community vision for the future of Downtown, outlining specific recommendations and strategies to help achieve that vision over time. Further, the plan establishes an expectation for future investment, communicating the types of uses, desired built form, and improvements for Downtown St. Joseph.



Regional Setting

Downtown St. Joseph is a premier lakefront destination in the heart of the Midwest. Located along the I-94 corridor and Amtrak's Michigan railroads, Downtown is easily accessible from Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, and Wisconsin. St. Joseph is within comfortable driving distance from numerous metropolitan areas; less than two hours from Chicago and Grand Rapids and within three or four hours from Detroit, Indianapolis, Toledo, and Milwaukee. Downtown's draw extends beyond the Midwest, attracting visitors from across the country.

LOCAL CONTEXT





Downtown Core



South Main Street Approach



Beach Front Area



Broad Street Approach

Study Area

The study area for St. Joseph Downtown Vision includes four separate districts, intended to guide the planning process. The primary study area is the Downtown Core, which will be the main focus of the recommendations and policies of the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan. In addition, three secondary study areas were identified due to their importance to the function of Downtown. This includes the Beach Front Area, the South Main Street Approach, and the Broad Street Approach. Recommendations for these areas will focus upon their relationship to the Downtown Core and include considerations for character and urban design.



Role of Downtown

Downtown St. Joseph serves a variety of different roles that together make it the heart of the St. Joseph community. These roles represent the uses, businesses, and destinations that bring individuals into Downtown. As residents, employees, and tourists visit Downtown St. Joseph, the different aspects of downtown that brought them there also inform how they view and understand the area. For example, a resident going to dinner will have a very different experience than a tourist heading to the beach for the day, or an attorney rushing to the Courthouse for a hearing. Each of these individuals could have an entirely different experience of Downtown St. Joseph. By recognizing the different roles that Downtown plays in peoples' lives, the Downtown Vision Master Plan will seek to enhance the experiences of all those who visit the area.

COMMUNITY FOCAL POINT

Downtown serves as the focal point and a defining landmark for the St. Joseph community. The variety of different uses and activities within Downtown foster a sense of community and enable social interaction. As a result, Downtown represents the community that surrounds it and residents feel invested in its success. Downtown's significance as the core of the St. Joseph community is central to the recommendations and policies of the Downtown Master Plan.

TOURIST DESTINATION

Downtown is a regional tourist destination that attracts residents from the surrounding region and tourists from across the country. This includes attractions like Lake Michigan, Silver Beach, the St. Joseph Lighthouse, the Silver Beach Carousel, Krasl Art Center, Curious Kids' Museum, Box Factory, Heritage Museum, and the shops and restaurants along State Street. Together, these result in considerable tourism within the community, particularly during the summer months.





SHOPPING & DINING

Downtown is a thriving retail district, home to numerous stores and shops as well as a variety of restaurants and dining options. These provide a range of goods and services that appeal to both tourists and visitors as well as residents and those who work in Downtown. The volume and diversity of options, particularly those along State Street, has preserved the vitality of Downtown over the years and helped to make the area a destination for shopping and dining.

EVENTS & ACTIVITY

Downtown hosts numerous events, festivals, and activities throughout the year, including the Krasl Art Fair, Chalk the Block, the St. Joseph Farmers Market, Antiques on the Bluff, Magical Ice Festival, weekly outdoor concert series, and March Mannequins. In addition, St. Joseph Today, the nonprofit organization that coordinates the majority of Downtown area's events, is located within Downtown. These events attract residents, visitors, artists, performers, and vendors from across the country and contribute to the excitement and desirability of Downtown.

INSTITUTIONAL

Downtown features many public uses and institutions that contribute to civic life within the City and County. This includes St. Joseph's City Hall and Fire Department; Berrien County's Courthouse, Sheriff's Department, and Administration Center; the U.S. Post Office; The Heritage Museum & Cultural Center; Lake Michigan Catholic Schools; and multiple religious uses. Together, these institutions provide services, amenities, and employment that brings individuals to Downtown not just on the weekend but throughout the week.

EMPLOYMENT

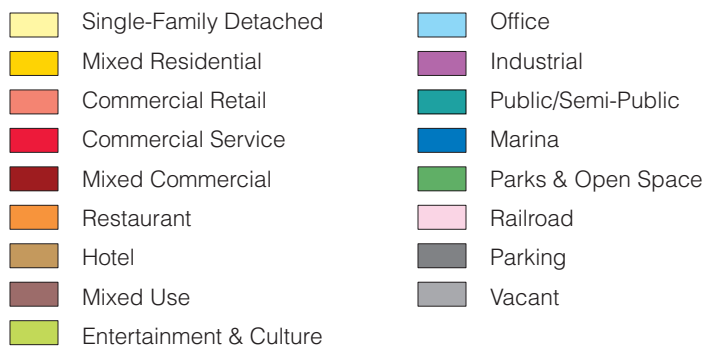
Downtown is also an employment center within the St. Joseph community, in part due to the large amount of institutional uses. The Berrien County Courthouse in particular draws a large number of attorneys and related professional firms to the area, primarily concentrated east of Main Street. These bring individuals to Downtown throughout the week and provide the weekday population to support commercial businesses within the area.

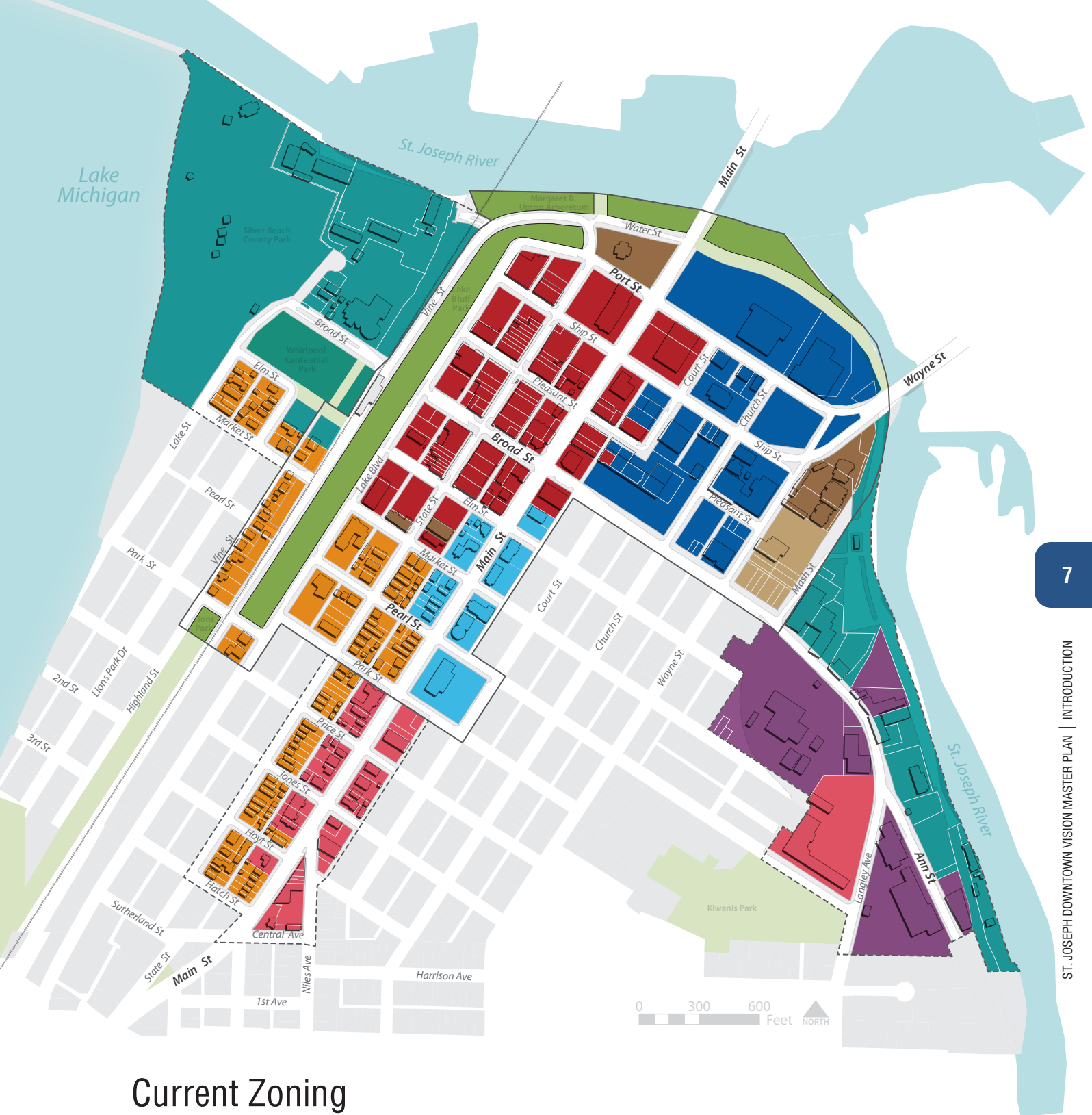




Existing Land Use








Planning in the Downtown must occur within the context of the existing land use patterns of development. Downtown St. Joseph has a healthy and appropriate mix, including a variety of commercial, residential, recreation, public, institutional, cultural, and open space uses. While a few of the properties in the study area are not typical for a Downtown, the majority of uses comprise a healthy and balanced mix and character.





Current Zoning

Zoning within St. Joseph is established by Section 33 of the City's Code of Ordinances, which regulates how land can be used and establishes standards for development. The Downtown study area contains nine of the City's 15 zoning districts. Some recommendations of this plan may require amendments to the City's existing zoning regulations and are addressed in the implementation section of this document.

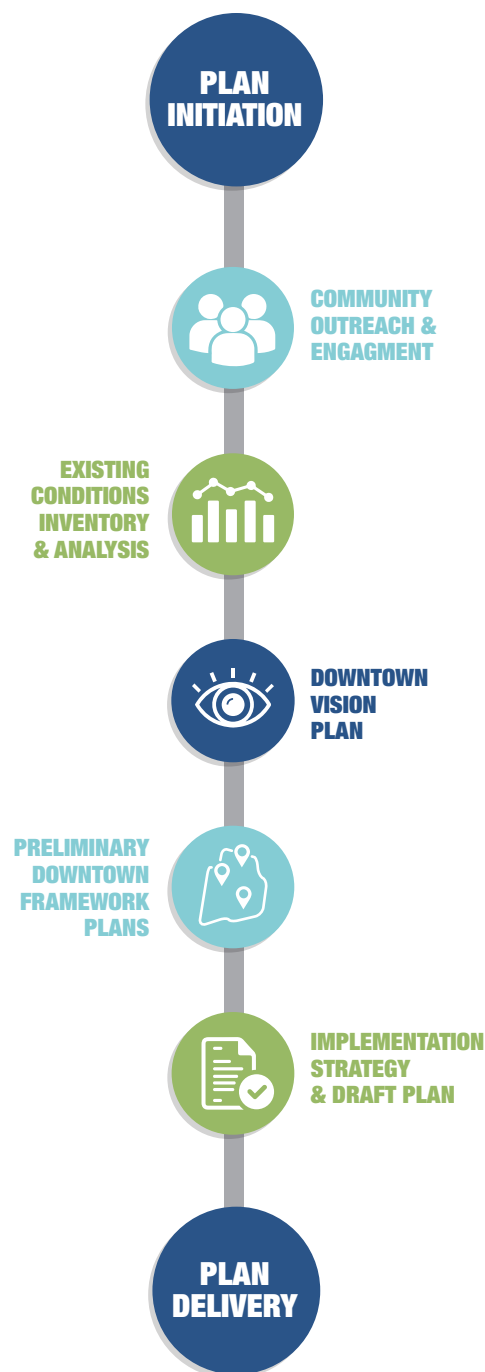
- | | |
|---|--|
|  Single Family Detached Residence (R1-E) |  Commercial Office (CO-A) |
|  Two-Family Residence (R2) |  Commercial Office (CO-B) |
|  Multiple Family Residence (R3) |  Downtown (D) |
|  Commercial Business (C) |  Light Industrial (I1) |
| |  Open Space (OS) |
| |  Water Recreation (W) |

Purpose of the Downtown Vision Master Plan

The St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan is the City's official plan and policy guide for Downtown St. Joseph. It provides a decision-making framework for City staff, elected and appointed officials, residents, business owners, and community stakeholders. The Plan presents a community vision for the future of Downtown, outlining specific recommendations and strategies to help achieve that vision over time. Further, the plan establishes an expectation for future investment, communicating the types of uses, desired built form, and improvements for Downtown St. Joseph.

Planning Process

The planning process for St. Joseph Downtown Vision first began in March of 2018 with establishment of the Downtown Plan Steering Committee (DPSC), charged with guiding the creation of a dedicated master plan for Downtown St. Joseph. The DPSC consists of 21 members, including residents and representatives from the City Commission, Downtown Development Authority (DDA), St. Joseph Today, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Parks Advisory Board. Following initial outreach conducted by the DPSC, the City hired the consultant team in September of 2018 to expand public engagement and develop the master plan, using the following six-step process over a 12-month timeframe.





±2,000

Instances of Engagement



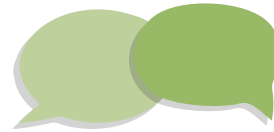
±300

Outreach Postcards Completed



±850

Individuals Engaged Online



±800

Individuals Engaged In-Person

Community Outreach

Engaging the St. Joseph community was critical to creating the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan. Outreach was at the core of the planning process, helping to identify the key issues and opportunities to be addressed. Public engagement included both in-person events and online tools designed to facilitate discussion and collect feedback from a diverse group of voices, including residents, visitors, the business community, property owners, City staff, local officials, and a variety of other stakeholders. Collectively, the community outreach undertaken in the planning process ensures the Master Plan is reflective of the needs and desires of residents, business owners and operators, local organizations and institutions, and many other stakeholders who shop, dine, and experience Downtown. In total, there were approximately 2,000 unique points of participation throughout the planning process.

OUTREACH COMPLETED

The following outreach events and online engagement tools were utilized to receive feedback from the St. Joseph community:

- ✱ **Steering Committee Workshop**, October 3, 2018
- ✱ **Community Workshop**, November 13, 2018
- ✱ **Downtown Business & Property Owners Workshop**, November 14, 2018
- ✱ **Visioning Workshop**, April 25, 2019
- ✱ **Outreach Conducted at Antiques on the Bluff**, May 5, 2019
- ✱ **Outreach Conducted at Krasl Art Fair**, June 13, 2019
- ✱ **Outreach Conducted at Chalk the Block**, August 3, 2019
- ✱ **Downtown Open House**, November 13, 2019

- ✱ **Postcards**, Distributed November 2018 through July 2019 – 285 Postcards Received
- ✱ **Project Website**, Available throughout the Project
- ✱ **Online Questionnaires**, Available October 2018 through July 2019
- ✱ **map.social** (Online issues mapping tool), Available October 2018 through July 2019

DPSC Outreach May, 2018

Prior to initiation of the master planning process, the Downtown Plan Steering Committee conducted initial outreach to engage residents about what changes they would like to see in Downtown. This included online surveys distributed to St. Joseph High School and employees of Lake-land Hospital and Whirlpool Corporations as well as 'pop-up' engagement at six locations and events in Downtown.



OUTREACH FINDINGS

The following is a synthesis of feedback received from all engagement completed as part of St. Joseph Downtown Vision. The outreach process yielded a wide range of issues, opportunities, ideas, and concerns regarding Downtown, all of which were incorporated as part of the planning process. However, several key themes emerged as being most important, and these themes were discussed extensively throughout the planning process. Given their emphasis, these themes have helped to focus the planning effort and inform the critical projects, policies, and recommendations of the Plan.

It is important to note that the content within this outreach findings summary does not represent recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan or City policy, but is intended to characterize the input received from those who participated in the planning process.

Parking

Parking was identified as a top issue. Many opinions were voiced, some contradictory. For example, some cited a lack of sufficient parking, while others insisted there was adequate parking but that it was difficult to find or located too far from desired destinations. The location, availability, duration, and turnover of parking was regularly discussed. The challenge of long-term parkers (employees and beach goers) parking in areas for shoppers and diners was identified. Many residents liked free parking but noted that parking fees could generate needed revenue to fund downtown improvements.

Traffic Flow

The movement of cars, pedestrians, and cyclists was a priority concern to residents. Participants indicated that existing traffic patterns can be confusing and difficult to navigate. The change of Lake Street to a one-way by Silver Beach during the summer months was regularly discussed as an issue. Increased summer traffic was highlighted as a challenge for both residents and tourists. The desire to improve traffic flow was supported, with many arguing that permanent changes to increase connectivity, capacity, and mobility are essential.

Alternative Modes of Transportation (bike, pedestrian, transit)

Participants hoped to see an increase in bicycle infrastructure that would better connect to the beach and neighboring residential areas and communities. Participants indicated they are forced to drive to Downtown despite their wish to bike due to the lack of infrastructure and safety. The desire for shuttle/trolley service to the beach and Downtown was also mentioned, which could further offset parking demands. Improvements to pedestrian safety within Downtown was identified as a priority.



Connecting Across Main Street

Better pedestrian connections across Main Street was a top concern. Main Street was emphasized as a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists given its width, the speed of cars, and high traffic volume. When considering the potential for growth in Downtown, residents indicated that the area east of Main Street should be a focus, and that efforts to improve connectivity across Main Street is essential.

Character of Downtown

Maintaining and enhancing the overall character of Downtown was a top priority for residents. While the character of State Street was well regarded, participants stated that other areas of Downtown appear dated or lacking in vibrancy. Generally, this concern was directed toward private property and connected to poor maintenance of buildings and infrastructure within the area, particularly the alleys.

Connecting Down the Bluff

Residents also hoped to see improved connectivity between Downtown and the lakefront, specifically better routes down the bluff. Existing stairs and ramps were considered challenging and unsafe for pedestrians. Business owners also believed the perceived distance to the beach discourages individuals from patronizing Downtown.

Business Diversity (strengthening year-round activity)

Residents and business owners desire greater business diversity with fewer shops catering to seasonal visitors. Establishing a robust year-round/non-seasonal business mix was a priority for participants. Residents desired additional shops and restaurants offering greater diversity of goods, services, and experiences. The need for later shop/restaurant hours was also frequently mentioned as important.

Boat Access

Despite being a lakefront community, participants noted a lack of direct access to Downtown from surrounding waterways. There are no public boat ties or slips near Downtown, and the City's marina is on the other side of the St. Joseph River, with no easy access to Downtown. Residents and business owners noted that providing boaters direct access to Downtown would capture more activity and bring new consumers into Downtown. There was a strong desire for public boat slips along the south bank of the St. Joseph River allowing short-term boat parking.

Underutilized Properties

While Downtown does not have many vacant lots, residents indicated that the visibility of certain vacant and underutilized properties detracts from the character of the area. This included the vacant lot on the southeast corner of Lake Boulevard and Pleasant Street (former YWCA property) as well as public and private parking lots. Redevelopment of these properties was identified as an opportunity to bring new uses and excitement into Downtown.

Attracting Youth & Young Adults

Residents indicated that Downtown does not appeal to teenagers and young professionals due to the lack of businesses, and amenities that appeal to these groups. Participants hoped to see new businesses, public spaces, and amenities that would attract younger residents to Downtown.

Activation of the Riverfront

Related to boat access, residents also hoped for better activation of the riverfront. Currently, the St. Joseph river is largely disconnected from Downtown due to the bluff, the courthouse, multi-family homes, and other private uses. Participants indicated the riverfront could be better activated with public spaces, recreational amenities, boat access, and a continuous trail connecting to the beach.



CHAPTER 2

VISION, GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The vision for Downtown St. Joseph is to foster a charming and thriving pedestrian-oriented mixed-use environment that is attractive and welcoming to residents and visitors. Downtown's attractiveness as a place to live, work, and play remains strong due to a vibrant mix of retail, restaurant, entertainment, service, recreation, office, residential, and civic uses all within close proximity. Public spaces are attractive and inviting, enhanced with landscaping, public art, and pedestrian amenities. The Downtown will be a lively and vibrant year-round focal point for the community, providing the ideal location for a wide range of events, festivals, and activities. The Downtown maintains and strengthens its relationship to Lake Michigan and the St. Joseph River with improved connectivity and enhanced and protected views and vistas.

New growth and development will be respectful of the unique sense of place and character that has defined Downtown St. Joseph for decades and must recognize the importance of preserving the views and access to one of the City's most valuable assets – Lake Michigan and its beautiful shoreline. New development provides a greater variety of residential uses within Downtown to better serve existing and future populations. Pedestrian activity and interest are maximized by prioritizing retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses on the first floor of existing and new buildings. Uses in the Downtown also include businesses providing daily goods and services for year-round residents of Downtown and the City.



The City of St. Joseph has long been defined by the excellent events, festivals, and activities that take place in and near Downtown every year. These remain a critical component of Downtown, reinforced by efforts to improve existing events and create new events that not only strengthen tourism and seasonal activity, but also focus on providing year-round gathering and engagement opportunities for St. Joseph residents.

To serve an active, thriving, and successful Downtown St. Joseph, a well-designed and run transportation network is in place to ensure safe and efficient access and mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, and automobiles. Enhanced crosswalks, signals, and signage help to create a more comfortable and effective pedestrian environment, and bicycle racks and designated routes provide improved bicycle safety and access.

Parking lots have been strategically designed and located to meet the parking needs of Downtown, be conveniently and easily accessed, and to prevent surface lots from dominating the visual landscape of Downtown. All areas of the Downtown, lakefront, riverfront, and surrounding areas are enhanced through improved connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists.

Specifically, the vision for Downtown St. Joseph contains five goals with supporting objectives.

Defining the Plan's Goals & Objectives

Goals describe the desired results toward which planning efforts should be directed. They are broad and long-range and represent an end to be sought as well as a point of consideration in reviewing proposed development.

Objectives describe more specific and measurable actions that should be undertaken to advance toward the overall goals identified.



Goal #1

Reinforce Downtown's distinct character and sense of place while accommodating desirable infill development.

Downtown St. Joseph is well-known for its charming character and welcoming atmosphere that attracts visitors from across the Midwest and beyond and provides a comfortable place for residents to spend their time. This character must be preserved by continuing to invest in attractive streets and active public spaces, maintaining historically and architecturally valued buildings, and protecting key views of local landmarks, particularly Lake Michigan, its shoreline, and the St. Joseph Lighthouse. However, Downtown also has the opportunity to grow and diversify through new development. To be successful, Downtown St. Joseph must safeguard its distinct sense of place by encouraging development that reinforces the established development pattern and contributes to the area's vital character.

Objectives

1. Identify and explore priority development opportunities that would serve as catalysts for improvement and investment within Downtown.
2. Explore opportunities for public/private development partnerships that incorporate public amenities as part of private development, such as parking, open space, and gathering spaces.
3. Ensure new development is appropriate and does not negatively impact the character of Downtown, including consideration for building scale and height, architectural style, streetwall and orientation, and other elements of built form.
4. Protect key views and vistas of Lake Michigan, the shoreline and beaches, St. Joseph River, and the St. Joseph Lighthouse, from being obstructed by new development.
5. Seek streetscaping improvements that contribute to Downtown's pedestrian-orientation and sense of place, including pedestrian amenities, crosswalks, pavement treatments, landscaping and street trees, lighting, signage, and other improvements.
6. Continue to incorporate public art throughout Downtown as part of parks and open spaces, streetscape improvements, private development, and public gathering spaces, including but not limited to permanent art installations, murals, and Krasl and Box Factory exhibits.
7. Preserve historic architecture, landmarks, and assets in Downtown and the adjacent neighborhoods.
8. Enhance the approach routes into Downtown to reflect the desired character of the district and announce arrival into the City's downtown core and lakefront area.

Goal #2

Strengthen Downtown as a vibrant and active year-round mixed-use district.

A critical component of what makes Downtown St. Joseph a thriving and vibrant city center is a diverse mix of uses, including local shops and restaurants, regional destinations and entertainment, housing, hotels, civic uses, offices and employment centers, Lake Michigan Catholic School, and public open spaces. Building upon this foundation, it is essential that Downtown remain a mixed-use district by taking advantage of key development sites, opportunities for new mixed-use development, and full activation of public spaces. New residential and mixed-use development should be prioritized to provide a greater range of housing options for year-round living in the Downtown. Non-seasonal businesses should be a core staple of the Downtown, offering residents goods and services and fostering a Downtown environment that is bustling and active throughout the year.

Objectives

1. Fully leverage the many public and semi-public facilities that help define Downtown's character and serve as major attractions and destinations within the community, including Krasl Art Center, the Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library, Curious Kids' Museum, Heritage Museum, and the Silver Beach Carousel.
2. Increase the Downtown population by encouraging new residential development that provides diverse housing options in the Downtown core and adjacent areas.
3. Maintain Downtown as a commercial and entertainment destination that attracts residents and visitors from across the region.
4. Foster business diversity that balances seasonal and tourism focused uses with businesses that provide daily goods and services to residents throughout the year.
5. Reinforce and diversify restaurant and hospitality options within Downtown to support seasonal tourism, events and festivals, and entertainment businesses.
6. Position Downtown as an employment hub that offers the amenities and services necessary to attract and retain existing employers, businesses, and professional firms.
7. Encourage mixed-use development that incorporates commercial, office, and residential uses in carefully designed, higher-density buildings.
8. Seek to balance the provision of safe and easily navigable sidewalks with the appropriate activation of sidewalks in Downtown, including sidewalk cafes, outdoor dining, interactive public art, and regulations to prohibit first-floor residential and office uses in the core.





Goal #3

Make getting around Downtown easy, safe, and efficient for all modes of transportation.

It is essential that Downtown St. Joseph is fully accessible to all modes of transportation throughout the year. How individuals get to and move around within Downtown directly impacts their enjoyment of the area. As the Downtown continues to grow in popularity, emphasis must be placed on safe and efficient transportation for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, including improvements to the flow of traffic and circulation, dedicated bicycle routes and amenities, easy and convenient parking, and safe pedestrian mobility and connections to key destinations. In addition to providing a safe and attractive pedestrian environment in all areas of the Downtown, providing better pedestrian connectivity across Main Street must be a focus of the plan in order to reduce its impact as a pedestrian barrier between the east and west portions of Downtown.

Objectives

1. Strategically locate and provide parking Downtown and in the adjacent areas that is easy to find and use, highly accessible, meets the needs of the mix of uses and activities, and is readily available throughout the year.
2. Enable efficient traffic flow and circulation in Downtown and adjacent areas that reduces congestion, particularly the movement of cars between the beaches and the Downtown area atop the bluff during the summer months.
3. Improve walkability throughout Downtown with improvements to sidewalks and crosswalks that increase safety for pedestrians.
4. Promote biking Downtown by developing necessary amenities and infrastructure that will improve safety, visibility, and convenience for cyclists, including but not limited to bike routes, dedicated bike lanes, bicycle parking, and improved signage.
5. Explore transit alternatives to improve access to Downtown from other parts of the City and region, as well as improved circulation with Downtown and its adjacent areas.
6. Improve the character, functionality, and safety of Main Street, including enhanced streetscaping, pedestrian crossings, access management, and lane/intersection configuration as necessary.
7. Design and implement an improved wayfinding, gateway, and directional signage system to effectively and attractively inform and direct Downtown visitors.
8. Continue to maintain Downtown roadways and alleys in good condition.

Goal #4

Leverage proximity to Lake Michigan, the St. Joseph River, Silver Beach, and other nearby recreation and environmental assets.

The value and importance of Downtown St. Joseph's proximity to Lake Michigan, the St. Joseph River, Silver Beach, the Bluff, and other recreation and environmental assets cannot be overstated. These features and amenities attract visitors from across the region and county and contribute significantly to the overall character and charm of Downtown St. Joseph. These assets will remain at the core of what defines Downtown and should be preserved, enhanced, activated, and fully leveraged to make Downtown St. Joseph an even greater place.

Objectives

1. Build upon and enhance the overall connectivity and essential connections between Downtown and Silver Beach/lakefront area, and riverfront areas, to improve movement between the areas and reinforce Silver Beach, the lakefront, and riverfront as an extension of Downtown.
2. Improve boat access to Downtown from Lake Michigan and the St. Joseph River that will enhance Downtown's position as a boating destination, including public docks and boat slips, and possibly boat shuttle/ferry service across the river, better connecting Downtown from Tiscornia Beach, St. Joseph River Yacht Club, and Benton Harbor destinations.
3. Continue to reinforce Bluff Park as a unique component of Downtown and valuable recreational space, including creative solutions to further activate the area.
4. Develop a comprehensive network of trails that provide access to major destinations and attractions throughout Downtown for pedestrians and cyclists, including expanding and better connecting the trail along the St. Joseph River.
5. Protect the invaluable views and vistas of Downtown from obstruction and development, particularly views of Lake Michigan, shoreline and beaches, and the St. Joseph pier and lighthouse.





Goal #5

Enhance the events, festivals, and outdoor community gathering opportunities in Downtown.

For many residents and visitors, Downtown St. Joseph is defined by its cherished events and festivals that draw crowds from across the Midwest, including Krasl Art Fair, Chalk the Block, March Mannequins, the Magical Ice Fest, Antiques on the Bluff, the Farmers Market, weekly outdoor concert series, and more. Existing events and festivals should be further refined to ensure they are attractive to all ages and easily accessible, while opportunities for new events should be explored to further strengthen Downtown St. Joseph's identity, boost its tourism appeal, and promote the City as a fun and enjoyable place to be.

Objectives

1. Continue to coordinate with St. Joseph Today to maintain the excellence of annual events and festivals.
2. Coordinate with St. Joseph Today to explore opportunities for new events and festivals and consider essential improvements that will ensure the continued quality of existing events.
3. Develop new pedestrian plazas on the northeast and southeast corners of Broad Street and Lake Boulevard to provide new gathering/open spaces and to protect essential views and vistas from downtown to the lakefront.
4. Explore opportunities to better activate open spaces, rights-of-way, and parking lots to accommodate and promote resident-focused events and activities.
5. Consider event-specific strategies to address traffic and circulation as well as public parking.
6. Consider event-specific capital improvements that will contribute to the quality and operation of annual events and festivals.



CHAPTER 3

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Historically developed between The Bluff and Main Street in a traditional street grid, Downtown St. Joseph is accessible, compact, and walkable. A mix of storefronts, restaurants, and other uses line State Street, the primary pedestrian-oriented street running through Downtown. As the blocks extend east of Main Street, development patterns change and uses vary more greatly, including a mix of larger scaled office and institutional uses with large accessory parking lots. Development in the areas west of Main Street is more pedestrian-oriented and the developed areas east of Main Street are generally more vehicular-oriented.

Through this planning process the St. Joseph community has voiced a strong desire to maintain and strengthen Downtown as an energized and thriving year-round activity center with a critical mass of commercial, entertainment, civic, cultural, recreational, and residential activity. By embracing traditional planning principles such as walkability, density, mixed-use environments, and design quality, Downtown St. Joseph can be positioned for decades of continued success. With that end in mind, this section presents a framework for land use and development within Downtown St. Joseph in a manner that balances the existing charm and character with opportunities for new development and improvement.

Downtown land use and development recommendations are based on an assessment of existing conditions and market potential, previous planning efforts, input from residents and business owners, and best planning practices.

Land Use

Almost all successful downtowns are best described as a mix of different land uses within a walkable and well-designed environment. This section provides a brief and general overview of desirable land uses within Downtown St. Joseph and how they contribute to making Downtown a unique area. Specific recommendations relative to use intensity and location are included in the subsequent section ("Functional Downtown Subareas"). Desirable land uses include:

- * Residential
- * Retail
- * Restaurant
- * Service
- * Office
- * Mixed-Use
- * Entertainment & Culture
- * Institutional/Civic
- * Parks, Open Space, & Recreation
- * Light Industrial/Business



Residential



Restaurant



Retail



Service

RESIDENTIAL

A residential population provides a consumer base for Downtown businesses and leads to greater pedestrian activity and foot traffic. Downtown St. Joseph could support a greater level of residential density through the addition of single-family attached, multi-family, and mixed-use development.

RETAIL

Retail is an essential element in positioning Downtown St. Joseph as a neighborhood shopping area for Downtown residents, a destination for the entire community, and an attraction for visitors. Support for retail will increase with greater Downtown residential density. Downtown's attractive and welcoming pedestrian-oriented environment provides a competitive retail advantage over other commercial destinations in the City and surrounding communities.

RESTAURANT

Similar to retail, restaurants are a crucial Downtown component for both residents and visitors, contributing significantly to the overall character, appeal, and experience of the area. Restaurants provide opportunities for social interaction and gathering. National trends indicate that more people are dining out more often, making restaurants an increasing key component of successful mixed-use environments.

SERVICE

Service uses, such as a barber shop/hair salon, dentist office, spas, or dry cleaner, generate activity in a downtown and can support the day-to-day needs of both downtown and city residents and area employees. However, too great a concentration of service uses within a compressed area can reduce pedestrian interest in Downtown and cause market oversaturation and perception.



Office



Entertainment & Culture



Parks, Open Space & Recreation



Mixed-Use



Institutional/Civic



Light Industrial/Business

OFFICE

Office uses increase the daytime population of Downtown St. Joseph and support retail, dining, and service businesses, particularly during the lunch hours and after work. Office uses can take many different forms, including small-single story office buildings, free-standing multi-story professional office space, and lower or upper floors of a mixed-use development.

MIXED-USE

Multi-story mixed-use buildings with ground floor commercial and upper floor office or residential units (either apartments or condominiums) are a core component of almost all successful downtowns. Within the State Street Downtown Core, mixed-use should be the predominant land use and development type.

ENTERTAINMENT & CULTURE

Experiences like visiting an art gallery or museum, attending a concert, or simply people-watching, are all unique attractions of Downtown. These types of “experience-driven” uses give downtowns a market edge, generating foot traffic and activity, and creating a unique experience that is generally hard to replicate in other areas of the community.

INSTITUTIONAL/ CIVIC

Downtown serves as the civic heart of the community. Civic/Institutional uses are public or semi-public uses such as municipal facilities, parks, churches, the courthouse, schools, and others. As they remain stable over time, they anchor the study area and act as a community focal point, consistently drawing patrons to the Downtown area.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

Parks, open space, and recreational areas and activities are an important component of Downtown and serve a vital role in the overall mix of uses. With the beaches, Lake Michigan, St. Joseph River, Bluff Park, boating, bike trails, Whirlpool Field Compass Park, and the overall pedestrian-friendly environment, Downtown is a destination for a variety of recreational activities.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL/ BUSINESS

Although not typically found in most downtowns, some uses along the Langley Avenue/Broad Street approach include light industrial and business uses that include outdoor storage, manufacturing/processing, and other uses generally considered incompatible with pedestrian-oriented downtowns. These uses are existing are not proposed for the core Downtown areas.

Functional Downtown Subareas

Although it is all considered part of one Downtown Study Area, several areas are unique and function quite differently from one another, each with its own defining characteristics, built form, traffic patterns, priorities and potentials. The need for a cohesive, connected Downtown must be balanced with respect for the function and role of each of these different geographic areas – each unique, each providing something different, and each contributing to the greater downtown collective.

To better address all aspects of the Downtown Study Area, six different “functional subareas” have been identified. They include:

Primary Subareas

- ✧ State Street Downtown Core
- ✧ East Main Campus Subarea
- ✧ Residential Transition Subarea
- ✧ Beachfront Subarea

Approach/Supporting Subareas

- ✧ South Main Street Approach
- ✧ Broad Street Approach

Analyzing Downtown within the context of these functional subareas has resulted in the identification of issues and recommendations specific to each district while coordinating strategies and policies to achieve the City’s collective vision for the future of Downtown. To address land use and development for each of the functional subareas, this section of the Master Plan defines the primary role and character of the area, the preferred uses, and the desirable built form.





STATE STREET DOWNTOWN CORE

Primary Role: Generate activity, excitement, community, and culture in an attractive and desirable pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district at the heart of St. Joseph.



This subarea is the true heart of Downtown St. Joseph and features a dense mix of uses that make it an activity center and social gathering space within the community. This includes a variety of commercial, entertainment, residential, office, and institutional uses with an emphasis on mixed-use development to increase density while activating the public realm. The preservation and enhancement of the subarea's distinct character and charm are a priority and should be key considerations for future public and private investment. Also critical to the continued success of the State Street Downtown Core will be balancing parking needs with appropriate infill development that contributes to the appearance and vitality of Downtown.

Preferred Uses & Development

- * **Mixed-use** (commercial ground floor, office and residential upper floors) – primarily located along State Street, Lake Boulevard, and the cross street in between, but appropriate anywhere in the core subarea.
- * **Retail** – appropriate anywhere in the core subarea.
- * **Restaurants** – appropriate anywhere in the core subarea
- * **Service** – limited ground floor presence along State Street and Lake Boulevard.
- * **Multi-family Residential** – existing, as part of mixed-use development, or possibly as stand-alone development east of Main Street.
- * **Institutional** – primarily existing, no new institutional proposed.
- * **Cultural** – appropriate anywhere in core subarea.
- * **Office** – primarily on upper floors of mixed-use and at select locations east of Main Street.
- * **Parks, Open Space & Recreation** – existing along the bluff, better connections to the riverfront west of Main Street, and new open space plazas at the intersection of Broad Street and Lake Boulevard, and as part of new development, enhancement of the riverfront east of Main Street with a new public marina and scenic overlook.

Character & Built Form

- * Continuous traditional streetwall should be maintained with buildings located at or near the sidewalk, with minimal or no front and side yard setbacks, oriented to the front of the property.
- * All surface parking lots should utilize screening, landscaping, and other treatments to provide a streetwall effect along roadway frontages.
- * Where appropriate, buildings should have strong orientation to Main Street, State Street, and Lake Boulevard.
- * Buildings primarily two to four stories in height, with taller buildings (6-8 stories) possible in select locations.
- * Parking should be oriented to the rear of properties and accessed from alleys or side streets where feasible. Surface parking should not be located fronting primary streets (Main Street, State Street, and Lake Boulevard).
- * Adaptive reuse of existing structures should be encouraged where feasible and appropriate.
- * Mixed-use development should be encouraged with ground floor uses that contribute to activity and excitement along the sidewalks and streets. In general, residential and office uses should be discouraged in favor of commercial businesses on the ground floor.
- * Protection of key views and vistas of the Lake Michigan, the beachfront area, and the western horizon.



EAST MAIN CAMPUS SUBAREA

Primary Role: Further strengthen the area for civic and institutional uses and activity, public services, and office uses within Downtown as important activity generators and to increase the daytime population.



This subarea is the center for civic activity and office uses within Downtown and the St. Joseph community, primarily focused around the Berrien County Courthouse. This area primarily includes a mix of institutional and civic uses supported by offices and professional service firms. Together, these uses provide a year-round day-time population for Downtown that supports Downtown shops, dining, and services. This area should continue as an office, institutional, and civic core of Downtown, providing economic support for the more traditional downtown uses located in the areas west of Main Street. However, as improvements are made to address mobility and connectivity across Main Street, the East Main Campus Subarea should support appropriate restaurant, retail, service and higher density residential that contribute to the diversity and vitality of Downtown.

Preferred Uses & Development

- ✱ **Office** – stand along office building or upper floor uses as part of mixed-use development.
- ✱ **Institutional/Civic** – primarily existing uses, with an emphasis on the importance of keeping the courthouse in Downtown.
- ✱ **Retail, Restaurant, and Service** - primarily located along or near Main Street.
- ✱ **Multi-Family Residential** – existing, as part of mixed-use development, or possibly as stand-alone development.
- ✱ **Mixed-Use** – appropriate anywhere in the subarea, most likely located along or near Main Street.
- ✱ **Parks, Open Space, & Recreation** – better utilization of the existing plaza at the corner of Court Street and Pleasant Street, and as part of new development, enhancement of the riverfront open space with new marina and scenic overlook.

Character & Built Form

- ✱ Buildings generally located on larger lots with dedicated off-street parking.
- ✱ Strong orientation of building fronts and entrances toward primary street frontages.
- ✱ Buildings located at or near the sidewalk where appropriate.
- ✱ Parking lots preferably located at the rear or sides of buildings rather than along primary road frontages.
- ✱ On-site parking lots with appropriate perimeter and interior landscaping.
- ✱ Buildings two to six stories in height, possibly taller at the intersection of Main Street and Port Street on the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners.
- ✱ Renewed emphasis on pedestrian realm/experience (ped/bike safety, amenities, design detail)



RESIDENTIAL TRANSITION SUBAREA

Primary Role: Maintain a picturesque primarily single-family scaled neighborhood, with institutional uses fronting Lake Boulevard, in a manner that supports activity in the Downtown Core while transitioning to lower-intensity neighborhoods to the south.



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This subarea significantly contributes to the overall character and charm of the greater Downtown area. The area reinforces the Downtown Core by providing a transition between the Downtown Core to the north and the residential neighborhood to the south. This area includes a mix of single-family detached and single-family attached homes, as well as institutional uses such as the Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library and Krasl Art Center. Efforts should be made to preserve the residential character of the subarea and maintain the picturesque neighborhood of historic and charming homes. While appropriate residential investment should be encouraged, development that is greater in scale and intensity should be directed to other more appropriate districts of Downtown.

Preferred Uses & Development

- ✱ **Single-family Detached Residential** – maintain existing and rehabilitate and replace as needed over time.
- ✱ **Single-family Attached Residential** – maintain existing and rehabilitate and replace as needed over time.
- ✱ **Institutional Uses** – maintain and continue to improve to ensure the long-term success and viability of the library and Krasl Art Center.
- ✱ **Parks and Open Space** – maintain existing Bluff Park and Bear Park at the corner of Market Street and State Street.

Character & Built Form

- ✱ Traditional neighborhood “rhythm” of standalone buildings with residential landscaped front and side yard setbacks, oriented to north-south streets where feasible.
- ✱ Residential scaled buildings two to three stories in height.
- ✱ Institutional uses along Lake Boulevard with strong orientation and presence along the street frontage.
- ✱ Parking on-site and accessed from rear alleys.



BEACH FRONT SUBAREA

Primary Role: Provide recreational and entertainment opportunities that appeal to both visitors and residents while elevating Downtown as a regional destination.



This subarea features recreational, entertainment, and residential uses positioned between the Downtown Core and Lake Michigan. This includes Silver Beach, the Silver Beach Carousel, Curious Kids Museum Discovery Zone, Whirlpool Compass Fountain, Amtrak station and restaurant, and a mix of single-family homes and multi-family residential. The Beach Front Subarea is a tourist destination that draws considerable auto and foot traffic to and through Downtown St. Joseph, contributing to the area's activity and vitality. As a result, the function, character, and accessibility of the Beachfront dramatically impacts the other subareas of Downtown and an individual's experience of the area. Emphasis should be given to prioritizing access and connectivity of the area, the character and appearance of both public and private property within the Subarea, further enhancement of the pedestrian environment, protection of the views from atop the bluff to the beach and lake, and careful attention to the detail, character, and appropriateness of any new development.

Preferred Uses & Development

- ✱ **Parks, Open Space & Recreation** – Priority must be given to preserving and enhancing open space and recreational amenities such as Silver Beach, Whirlpool Field, and other lakefront area open space and recreational amenities.
- ✱ **Entertainment & Cultural** – appropriate and desirable within the subarea, including the Silver Beach Carousel.
- ✱ **Single-family Residential** – existing neighborhood south of Whirlpool Field should remain, homes should be rehabilitated as needed and infill developed accommodated as appropriate.
- ✱ **Multifamily Residential** – maintain existing multifamily residential development along the river but prohibit additional development that may obscure views to the west horizon and lakefront area.
- ✱ **Short-Term Rental** – continue to utilize/operate some residential properties in this area as short-term rentals for visitors.

Note: The Parks Advisory Board Master Plan includes the area between Lake Street and the Bluff.

Character & Built Form

- ✱ Prioritize urban design and pedestrian environment improvements along the sidewalk and surrounding areas between Silver Beach and the lakefront and the steps leading down the bluff from the Downtown Core.
- ✱ Single-family residential structures on lots with minimal front and side yard setbacks.
- ✱ Single-family residential structures two to three stories in height.
- ✱ Single-family residential properties utilizing access from rear alleys.
- ✱ New development should be considerate of Lake Michigan and the St. Joseph River, including efforts to mitigate potential impacts and preserve views of the waterway. In particular, new development should not block views of Lake Michigan, the St. Joseph Lighthouse, Silver Beach, or the St. Joseph River from Lake Boulevard and Lake Bluff Park.
- ✱ New commercial development should not be introduced in the subarea.

SOUTH MAIN STREET APPROACH

Primary Role: Announce entry into Downtown, provide direction and information to Downtown destinations, and maintain attractive, nicely landscaped, neighborhood compatible, low intensity development, including residential and commercial uses.



This secondary subarea is the primary gateway to Downtown St. Joseph from the south. It is the overall scale, appearance, and character of this corridor that is most important, while accommodating a variety of neighborhood compatible uses. The corridor provides uses that include a mix of smaller commercial, office, institutional, and residential uses. Many single-family residential structures have been converted to commercial/office uses which adds to the charm and small scale of development. The corridor carries significant traffic with the merging of Niles Avenue (M-63 business) and Lakeshore Drive (I-94 business loop). Properties within the subarea should be attractive, nicely landscaped, and well maintained to establish a positive first impression upon entry into the Downtown. Key to the success of this subarea will be the incorporation of gateway features and signage welcoming people to Downtown St. Joseph, and the overall character and appearance of properties, development and buildings along the corridor.

Preferred Uses & Development

- * **Commercial Businesses** (retail and service uses) – existing along the corridor frontage on several blocks, commercial development should remain primarily 1-3 story to ensure neighborhood compatibility; improved perimeter parking lot landscaping and site landscaping is important and improvement is needed for many of the existing commercial properties.
- * **Office** – appropriate throughout the subarea in standalone commercial building or as uses within single-family residential structures that line the corridor.
- * **Residential** – appropriate for the single-family residential structures that line the corridor, including upper floors, first floor, or occupancy of the entire structure.

Character & Built Form

- * Building setbacks vary, with most commercial structures having no front setback and residential structures having small front setbacks.
- * Allow appropriate conversions of residential structures for commercial uses along Main Street while retaining a residential neighborhood character.
- * Attractively landscaped sites and yards.
- * Buildings with strong orientation to Main Street.
- * Buildings one to three stories in height.
- * Parking on-site, accessed from rear alleys, with existing curb cuts along Main Street eliminated over time and replaced with alley access.
- * Parking lot perimeter landscaping/screening for commercial properties is essential.



BROAD STREET APPROACH

Primary Role: Announce entry into the East Main Campus and Downtown Core Subareas while supporting a mix of uses within an attractive industrial/mixed-use corridor.



This subarea is a secondary gateway to Downtown from the east. While some uses have transitioned, the subarea has retained its industrial character, including Vail Rubber Works, Pri Mar Petroleum, and the City's Public Services Facility. Uses for this subarea will include a mix of industrial, commercial, marina, and higher density residential that strengthens employment and provides housing diversity within proximity to the Downtown Core. Emphasis should be given to improving the streetscape along the corridor and the appearance of properties within this subarea. The area should be improved to be welcoming and reflective of other subareas in Downtown. Redevelopment of some of the industrial areas should be anticipated over time and welcomed.

Preferred Uses & Development

- ✱ **Light Industrial** – many of the existing low intensity light industrial uses will likely remain, but no new industrial development is recommended.
- ✱ **Commercial** – while some restaurant, tavern and service commercial uses exist, additional commercial uses would be desirable and appropriate.
- ✱ **Multifamily Residential** – existing multi-family residential development exists between Broad Street and the river, and additional multi-family development could be appropriate within the same area or west of Langley/Broad Street between Pearl Street and the City's Public Service Facility.
- ✱ **Marina and Recreation** - existing uses along the river should continue, be expanded if possible, and be improved over time, including increased connectivity on riverfront trail.
- ✱ **Community Facility** – the existing City Public Service Facility is likely to remain.
- ✱ **Cultural/Civic** – the existing Box Factory for the Arts is a highly desirable use and an excellent example of adaptive reuse of a historic structure.

Character & Built Form

- ✱ No uniform character defines building sizes and setbacks – generally, along the north or east side of the street, many of the buildings have zero front setback, while the south or west side of the street is fronted with surface parking lots and buildings setback from the road.
- ✱ Buildings with strong orientation to Broad Street/Langley Avenue.
- ✱ Parking on-site with attractive and effective perimeter landscaping.
- ✱ Attractively landscaped sites (Vail Rubber should serve as a model site).
- ✱ Development should be considerate of proximity to the St. Joseph River, including efforts to mitigate potential impacts and preserve views of the waterway where appropriate.
- ✱ Enhanced streetscape, gateways, and wayfinding is essential.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES

To guide future investment within Downtown, Development Opportunity Sites have been identified within the study area. While all properties are potential candidates for redevelopment, these sites are best positioned for development and reinvestment due to age, condition, site utilization, strategic location, or a combination of these factors. Redevelopment of these sites could have a substantial impact on the character and vitality of Downtown. These should not be considered as recommended site plans or statements of development intent, but rather an indication of potential for possible new development in Downtown. Development Opportunity Sites are categorized in two groups:

- ✧ **Primary Sites** – These properties have high visibility and are of a size and/or location to significantly impact Downtown, thus substantially increasing their desirability for development. To demonstrate the potential impact of reinvestment on these sites, development concepts have been created to help visualize potential.
- ✧ **Secondary Sites** – These sites, while well positioned for development, would have a lesser impact than primary sites, due primarily to size and location.



Development Opportunity Sites

- Primary Site
- Secondary Site

- ✱ **Site 1:** (city owned; 2 lots; 1 acre combined; surface parking lots) These properties should be developed as 3-4 story public parking garages to help offset public parking taken offline for development elsewhere in Downtown.
- ✱ **Site 2:** (city owned; 0.3 acres; surface parking lot) The City should sell this property for mixed-use development, featuring ground floor commercial with residential above. Construction should be three to four stories in height with no front or side yard setbacks. (This site is further discussed on pages 34-35)
- ✱ **Site 3 & 4:** (Site 3-two properties, one privately and one city owned; 0.3 acres. Site 4-city owned, 0.4 acres; surface parking lots) The City should seek mixed-use development on these properties, featuring ground floor commercial with residential above. This should include a setback from Broad Street of approximately 60' to preserve valued views and vistas and to accommodate creation of new pedestrian plazas/open space. The City should coordinate with the owner of the private lot on Site 3 to enable development, exploring opportunities for a land swap with the city owned parking lot to the south. (These sites are further discussed on page 34-35)
- ✱ **Site 5:** (privately owned; 0.4 acres; vacant) This vacant site should be targeted for mixed-use development, featuring ground floor commercial with residential above. Construction should be three to four stories in height with no setback along Lake Boulevard and an approximately 20' setback along Ship Street to maintain views and State Street and provide for greater sidewalk activation. (This site is further discussed on page 34-35)
- ✱ **Site 6:** (city owned; 0.6 acres; surface parking lot) The City should sell this property for mixed-use development, featuring ground floor commercial with residential above. Construction should be 3-4 stories in height with no front or side yard setbacks. (This site is further discussed on page 34-35)
- ✱ **Site 7:** (privately owned; 0.4 acres; surface parking lot) This site should be developed for a 2-4 story mixed-use development, featuring ground floor commercial with office or possibly residential uses above. Development would likely require providing parking on an adjacent or nearby property to replace loss of existing parking and provide parking for any new development.
- ✱ **Site 8:** (city owned; 0.4 acres; surface parking lot) Dependent upon parking improvements elsewhere in Downtown, the City should develop this site for a 2-3 story public parking deck or sell the property for 3-5 story mixed-use development.
- ✱ **Site 9:** (privately owned; 0.2 acres; exiting drive-through bank facility) This site should be targeted for redevelopment as either a commercial or mixed-use building, with an emphasis on establishing a more urban character along Main Street and reducing drive-thru uses in Downtown. Construction should be 3-4 stories in height.
- ✱ **Site 10:** (privately owned; 1.8 acres; hotel and parking lot) This site should be a priority for redevelopment that contributes to the desired character along both State Street and Main Street. This could include construction of a new hotel oriented to Main Street, a mixed-used building at the corner of State Street and Ship Street, and a public/private parking deck on the remainder of the property. (This site is further discussed on Page 38)
- ✱ **Site 11:** (county owned; 2 acres; surface parking lot) This site should be a priority for redevelopment that announces entry into the Downtown and acts as a landmark along the St. Joseph riverfront. This could accommodate both mixed-use development, hotel, and multi-family residential, with an emphasis on leveraging visibility and access to the riverfront. Development up to eight stories or more could be appropriate. (This site is further discussed on Page 39)
- ✱ **Site 12:** (privately owned; 1.8 acres; shopping center and parking lot) This site should be a priority for redevelopment that contributes to a more urban character along both Main Street and Court Street. This should include commercial or mixed-use development along Main Street with a multi-family apartment building along Court Street. (This site is further discussed on Page 40)
- ✱ **Site 13:** (city owned; 0.2 acres; surface parking lot) Dependent upon parking improvements elsewhere in downtown, the City should sell this property for redevelopment, either as a 2-3 story commercial, office, or a mixed-use building.
- ✱ **Site 14:** (county owned; 1.6 acres; surface parking lot) The City should coordinate with Berrien County to develop a multi-level parking deck on this site. This would provide additional parking spaces for the County Courthouse, necessary to offset those lost as part of redeveloping Site 11. (This site is further discussed on page 37)
- ✱ **Site 15:** (city owned; 0.8 acres; surface parking lot) Dependent upon parking improvements elsewhere in Downtown, the City should sell this property for redevelopment. This could include a 2-4 story office, multi-family residential, or a mixed-use development.

LAKE BOULEVARD FRONTAGE

PRIMARY SITES 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6

Lake Boulevard is one of Downtown's most distinctive roadways, offering unparalleled views of Lake Michigan, Silver Beach, and the St. Joseph River. Looking west from Lake Boulevard individuals can see to the horizon and watch a St. Joseph sunset, considered among the most beautiful in the world. However, looking east along much of Lake Boulevard individuals are confronted with unscreened, unsightly parking lots, vacant lots, and interspersed structures. In total, for the four blocks between Ship Street and Market Street, approximately 80% of the east side frontage of Lake Boulevard is parking lots and a vacant lot.

Improving the character and experience along Lake Boulevard should be a top priority. If the surface lots are to remain, efforts should be made to better screen parking lots, foster greater pedestrian activity, and improve the appearance of the core Downtown's western edge. Ideally, the City should encourage appropriate infill development of the surface lots that will create a consistent building streetwall along the roadway. This will also provide opportunities for new shops, restaurants, mixed-use buildings, and other uses that will bring greater excitement to Lake Boulevard.

It should be noted that replacing surface parking lots with new development will decrease the amount of public parking unless new public parking is provided elsewhere. As discussed within the **Parking and Transportation Chapter**, the City should take a proactive approach to identifying locations for new public parking lots and garages. This approach would provide the need for public parking in alternate locations while enabling development along Lake Boulevard that is beneficial to the character of Downtown.





Existing

To provide an understanding of how the Lake Boulevard Frontage could be improved, two development concepts have been identified.



Option A

Parking Perimeter Landscaping:

Public parking lots along Lake Boulevard remain. The westernmost parking stalls on each aisle used for perimeter parking lot landscaping and hardscaping to screen the parking and provide a "pedestrian edge" along the sidewalk.



Option B

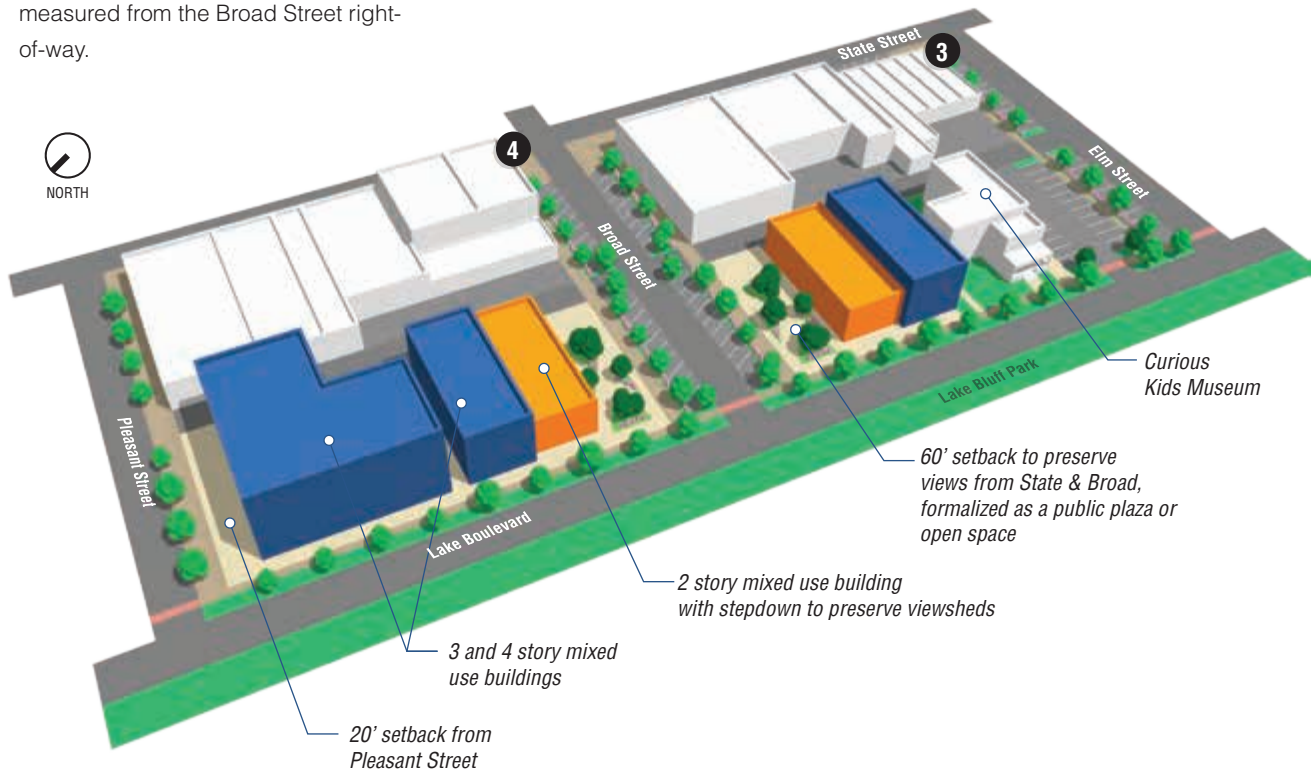
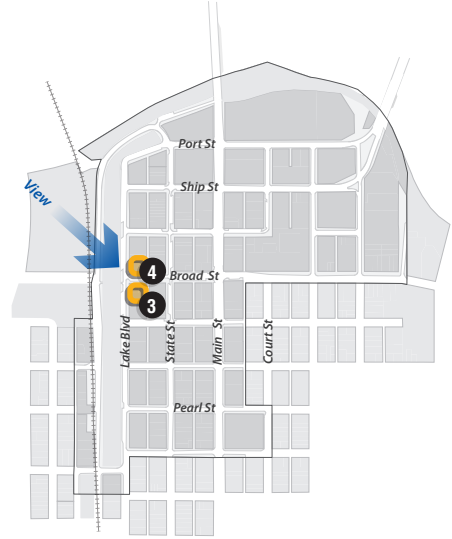
Development at Select Locations: Development targeted to select locations along Lake Boulevard, establishing a continuous streetwall. This should include public plazas on the corners of Broad Street and Lake Boulevard, with adjacent buildings limited to two stories, then up to four stories as sites move further from Broad Street. This will create new pedestrian gathering spaces and protect key westward views from State Street.

LAKE BOULEVARD & BROAD STREET

PRIMARY SITES 3 & 4

The intersection of Lake Boulevard and Broad Street is an important focal point in Downtown and a key node between the core Downtown, Bluff Park, and the Beachfront area. This westward view is the terminal vista along Broad Street that helps to pull a sense of openness and the lakefront character into the interior of Downtown. The northeast and southeast corners, currently parking lots, should be developed as new pedestrian plazas that provide public gathering spaces while protecting the valued viewsheds of Lake Michigan. The plazas should extend from Lake Boulevard to the eastern alley, and be approximately 60 feet deep as measured from the Broad Street right-of-way.

To further protect views and openness, the height of buildings along this section of Lake Boulevard should be regulated. Buildings adjacent to the plazas should be limited to two stories, then to four stories further north and south along Lake Boulevard. Development on these properties should be mixed-use, featuring ground floor commercial with residential or office uses above; however, opportunities for upper floor restaurants that offer views down the bluff should also be considered. Outdoor dining and activated seating areas should be encouraged along the Lake Street frontage.



MAIN STREET & PORT STREET

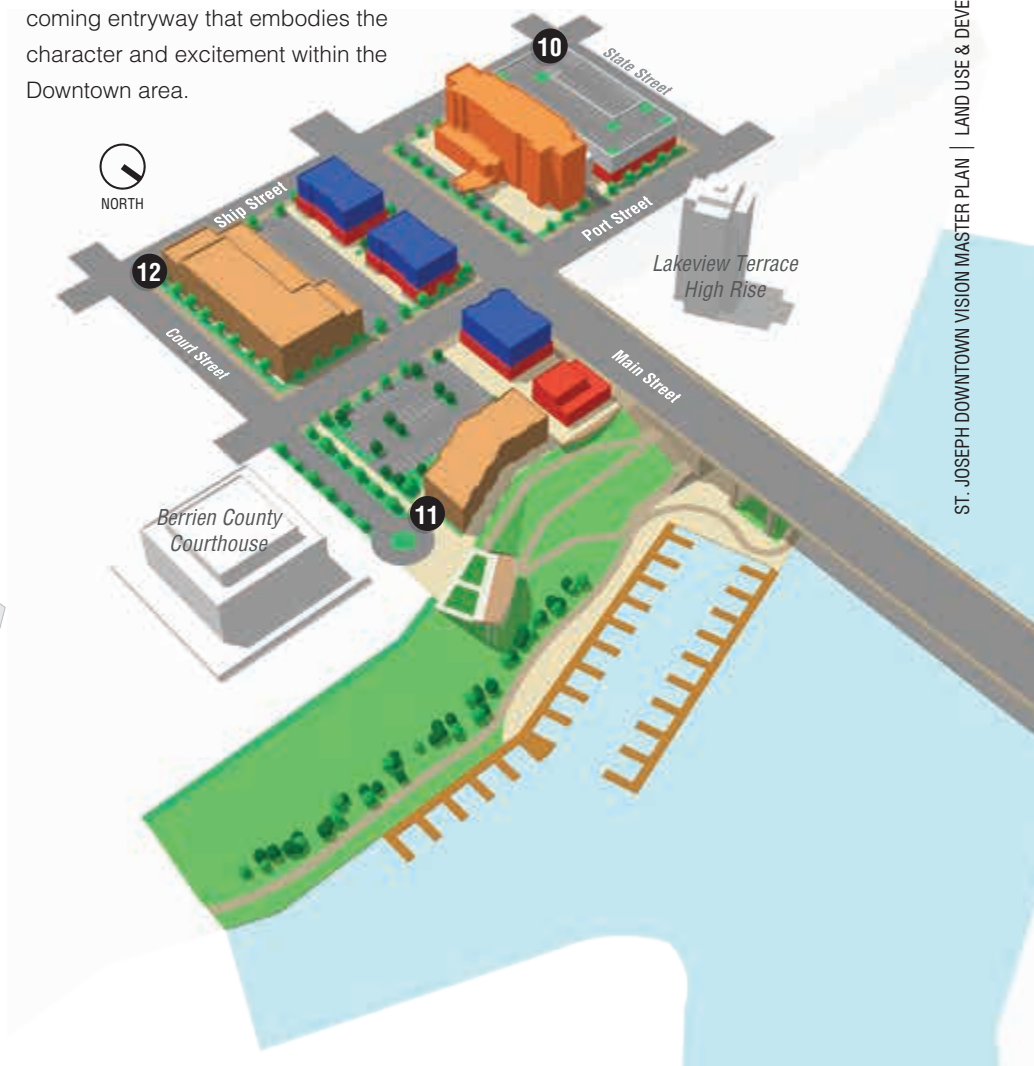
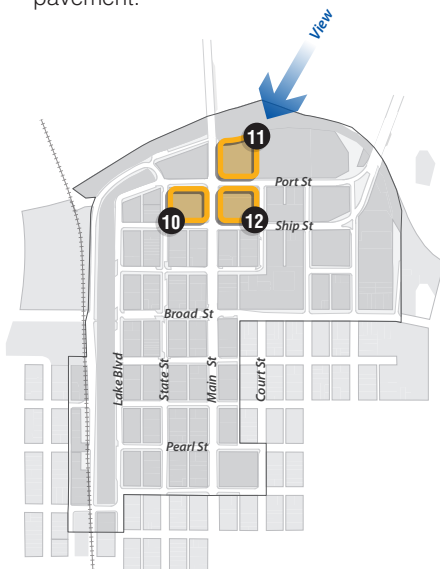
PRIMARY SITES 10, 11, & 12

The intersection of Main Street and Port Street is a critical gateway into Downtown St. Joseph, both for traffic heading southbound on Main as well as entering from Benton Harbor on Port. This intersection is the furthest northern extent of Downtown, with beautiful views of the St. Joseph River. The uses surrounding the intersection include the Berrien County Courthouse, a commercial shopping center, Silver Beach Hotel, and Lakeview Terrace High Rise. However, the design of these properties has resulted in parking directly adjacent to the intersection itself on all sides, including significant areas of uninterrupted and deteriorating pavement.

This intersection has a profound impact on the character and image of the area, both as a gateway to Downtown and a heavily trafficked route through St. Joseph. Redevelopment of the properties surrounding Main and Port would provide an opportunity to better shape first impressions of Downtown and establish a welcoming entryway that embodies the character and excitement within the Downtown area.

Further, intensification of these properties would provide space for additional residential and commercial uses that take advantage of their visibility along Main Street and proximity to the riverfront. The Lakeview Terrace High Rise should remain per existing requirements and conditions.

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Site 10: Silver Beach Hotel

Positioned between Main Street and State Street, this property contributes to the character and environment of both roadways. The seven-story hotel is located on the eastern half of the property with a row of surface parking along Main Street. The western half of the block consists of a large surface parking lot with frontage along State Street, effectively creating a dead-zone along the entire blockfront. The City should encourage construction of a new hotel or mixed-use building oriented to Main Street as well as mixed-use buildings with ground

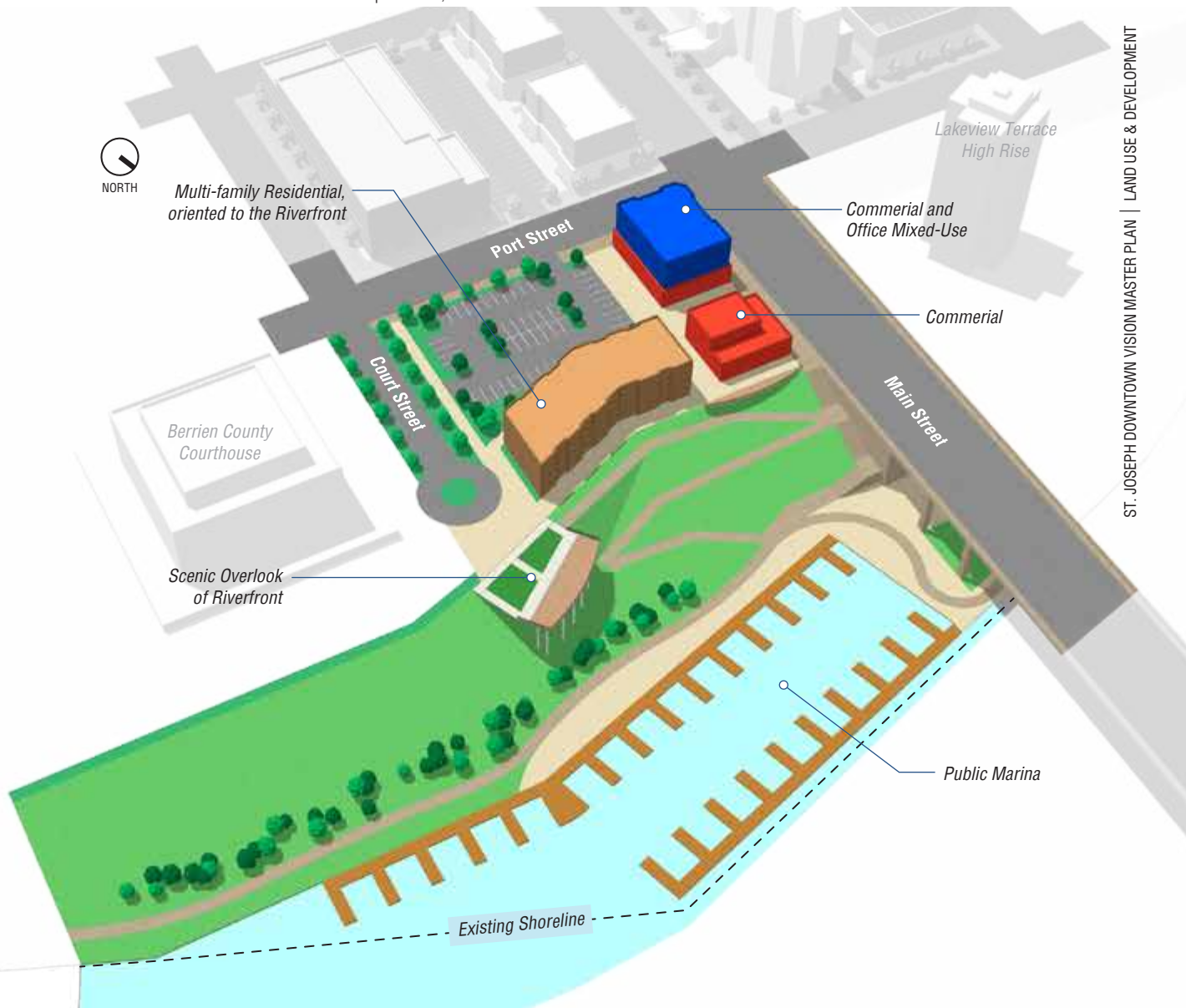
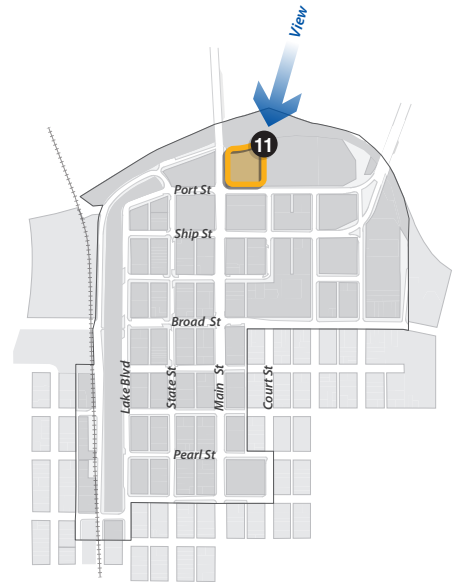
floor commercial fronting along State Street. These buildings could be connected and share centrally located parking on the site, preferably in a parking structure. Buildings along Main Street should be three to eight stories in height while those along State Street should be two to three stories in height. Through careful design, redevelopment of this property would serve as an attractive gateway to Downtown, strengthen the urban character of Main Street, and extend the inviting environment of State Street north to the riverfront.



Site 11: Berrien County Courthouse Parking Lot

The Courthouse extends two blocks along Port Street, backing to the St. Joseph riverfront. The block directly adjacent to the intersection of Main and Port is entirely dedicated to surface parking, occupying one of the highest visibility corners within Downtown. This portion of the property should be a target for mixed-use development including ground floor commercial with office or multi-family above.

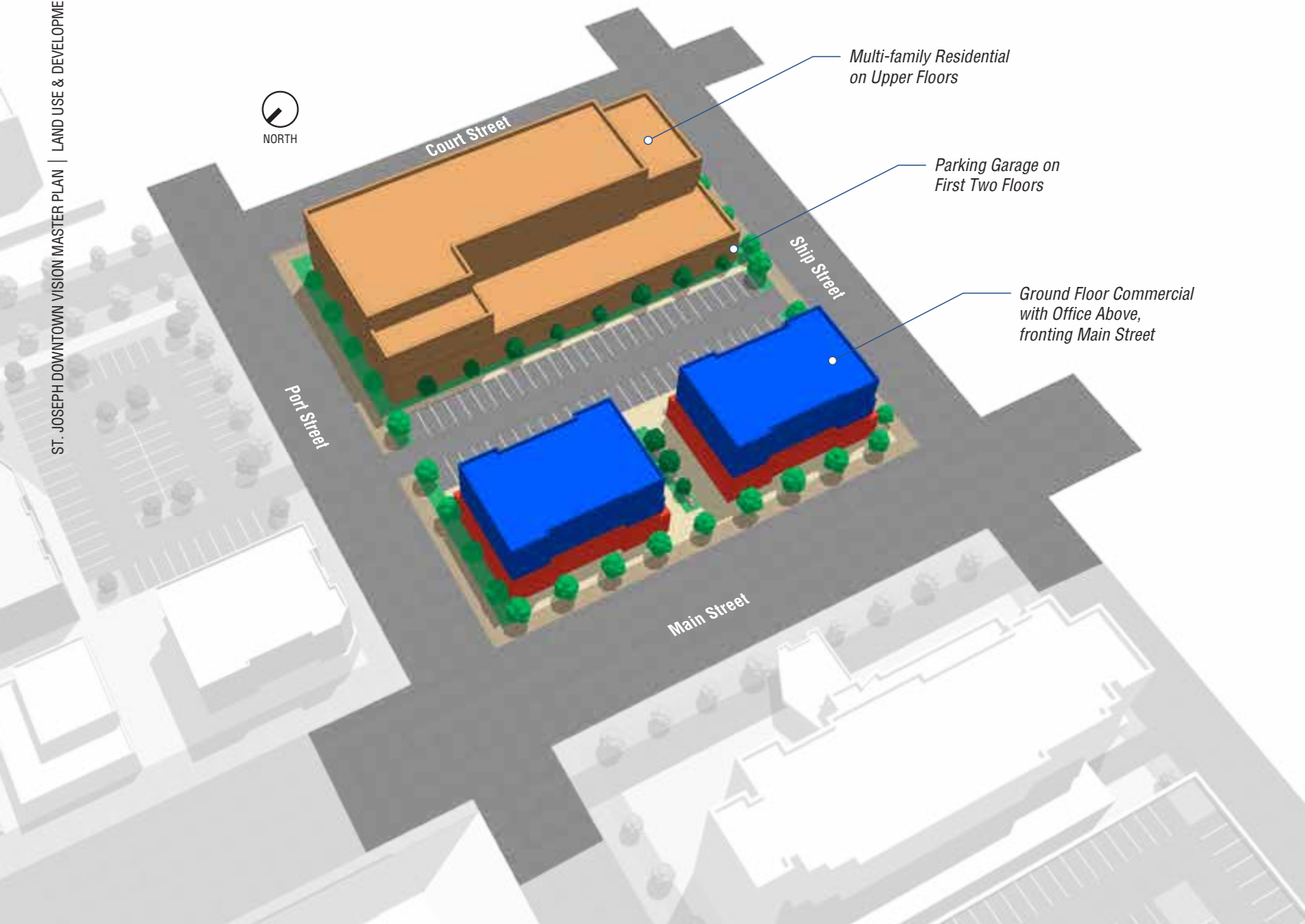
Design of the property should incorporate access and utilization of the riverfront to the north, such as a restaurant with a back patio looking out on the river. The structure should be between three and eight stories in height. Attractive design of this property could create a focal point and landmark along the St. Joseph River. To offset the loss of parking, the County should consider constructing a parking deck on the site of the existing surface parking lot located on the block bound by Port Street, Ship Street, and Church Street.



Site 12: Commercial Shopping Center

This property contains a shopping center with surface parking on three sides, including two rows of parking along the Main Street frontage. Overall, the design and scale of the development is more suburban in character and oriented to automobile access. Redevelopment of this property would help to establish a significantly more appealing Downtown environment along Main Street.

Any new development should be oriented to Main Street, three to eight stories in height, and feature a mix of uses, including ground floor commercial with office or multi-family residential above. On-site surface parking should be discouraged, however, if allowed, it should be interior to the site or at the rear of the property along Court Street, rather than fronting Main Street.

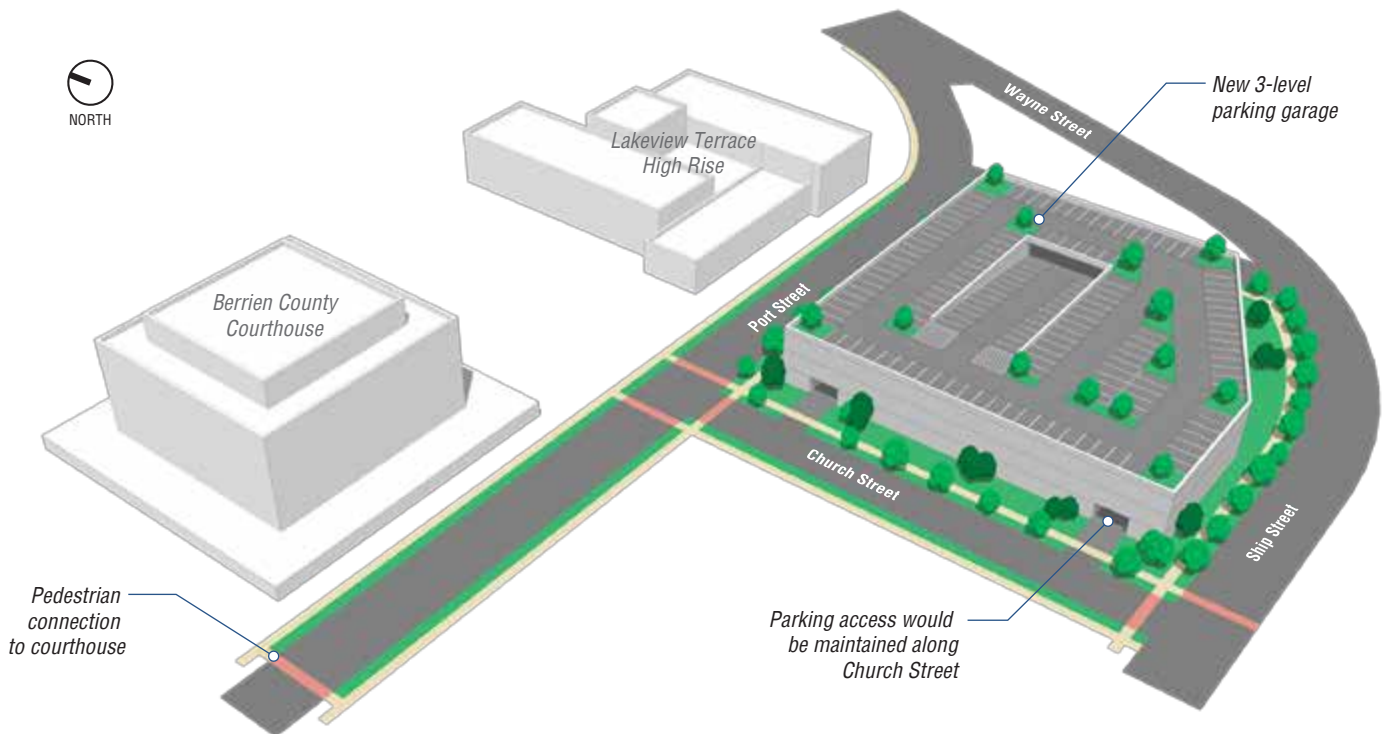


COUNTY COURTHOUSE PARKING GARAGE

PRIMARY SITE 14

Development of the surface parking lot adjacent to the County Courthouse (Site 11) would eliminate a considerable amount of dedicated courthouse parking. In order to offset the loss of parking at the Courthouse and provide additional parking for Downtown, the County could construct a parking garage on the site of its existing surface parking lot at Port Street and Ship Street (Site 14).

The City should coordinate with the County to encourage this project, the cost of which could be offset by selling of Site 11 for development.





HARBOR TOWN INTERIORS

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CHAPTER 4

TRANSPORTATION & PARKING

Convenient, effective, and safe access and circulation to and within Downtown is essential. And while a key hallmark of any successful downtown is the establishment of an attractive pedestrian-oriented environment, a successful downtown must also accommodate automobile traffic, parking, biking, and transit. Given the seasonal nature of many of the activities in and near Downtown St. Joseph, transportation and parking needs fluctuate wildly throughout the year, further challenging the balanced provision of transportation systems and parking facilities to meet the varying needs.

Through careful design, transportation can enliven a downtown by helping to creating safe and accessible spaces where people want to spend time. Positioned at the core of the community, Downtown St. Joseph must balance differing modes of transportation while fostering a comfortable and inviting environment. This chapter identifies recommendations and strategies for transportation and parking to ensure access, efficiency, and safety for all modes of transportation.

Traffic Access & Circulation

Streets in St. Joseph are classified into categories that describe their desired function according to the National Functional Classification system. Functional classifications indicate the capacity and hierarchy of a roadway network, including the following categories:

- ✧ **Primary Arterials** provide a high degree of mobility and function as the primary travel routes through urban areas.
- ✧ **Minor Arterials** augment principal arterials by accommodating shorter trips to and from residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, employment centers, and recreational areas at the community level.
- ✧ **Major & Minor Collectors** consist of medium capacity roads that have limited continuity and serve to distribute traffic between higher level arterials and lower level local streets.
- ✧ **Local Streets** provide direct access to private property and are accessed from arterial and collector roads.

In addition to the National Functional Classification system, the City of St. Joseph has separately identified “major thoroughfares”. The primary function of these roadways is to provide an arterial route for through traffic. The following roadways are major thoroughfares within the Downtown Study Area:

- ✧ Main Street
- ✧ Broad Street (east of Main Street)
- ✧ Port Street (east of Main Street)
- ✧ Ship Street (east of Main Street)
- ✧ Wayne Street (North of Broad Street)
- ✧ Niles Avenue

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

Traffic primarily flows through Downtown along Main Street, Ship Street, and Port Street. Lake Boulevard and Broad Street carry a moderate amount of local traffic to and from Downtown, and State Street is a low volume street with diagonal parking and one-way traffic from Ship Street to Elm Street. In general, the roadway network operates well during regular and peak hours. Congestion occurs on the busiest weekends of the summer season and during Downtown events and festivals.

PEAK SEASON CIRCULATION

Silver Beach draws thousands of visitors during the summer months. This creates a bottleneck as cars queue to enter beach parking, backing up as far as State Street and even Main Street. While the City is responsible for traffic on these streets, the beach and its parking are owned and operated by Berrien County. Recently, the City has altered traffic flow along Lake Street to one-way south. While this has helped to alleviate congestion, the backup of cars continues to be an issue. This is largely attributed to the County's pay and entrance operations for beach parking, which is a slow and inefficient system, particularly as the lot approaches capacity.

The City should work with the County to encourage new strategies and parking operation improvements that will decrease queuing. Improvements should be made to beach parking and traffic control, including the following:

- ✧ Automated parking access equipment to speed up lot operations (take ticket as you enter, pay as you leave)
- ✧ Traffic control to prohibit queuing while waiting for vehicles to exit the lot.
- ✧ Strategically adjusting parking pricing to distribute parking demand.
- ✧ Remote parking and shuttle service.

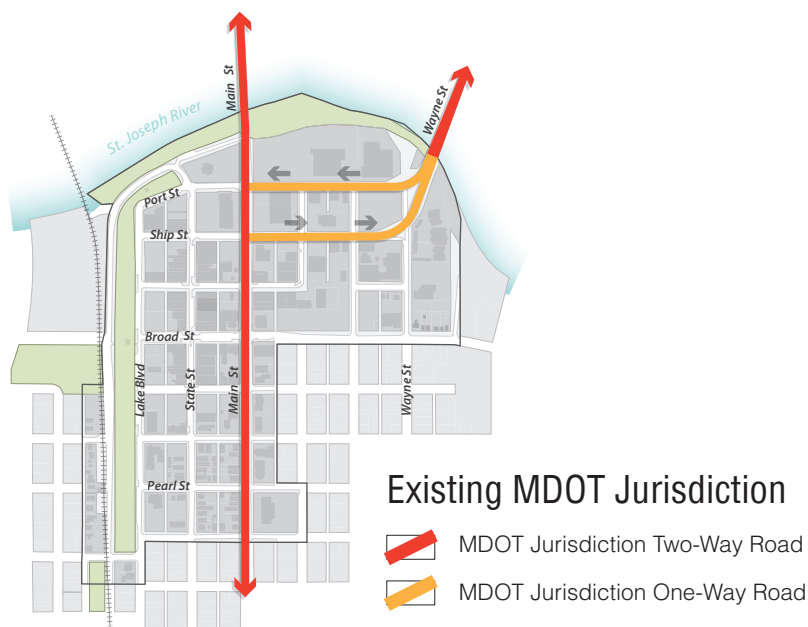






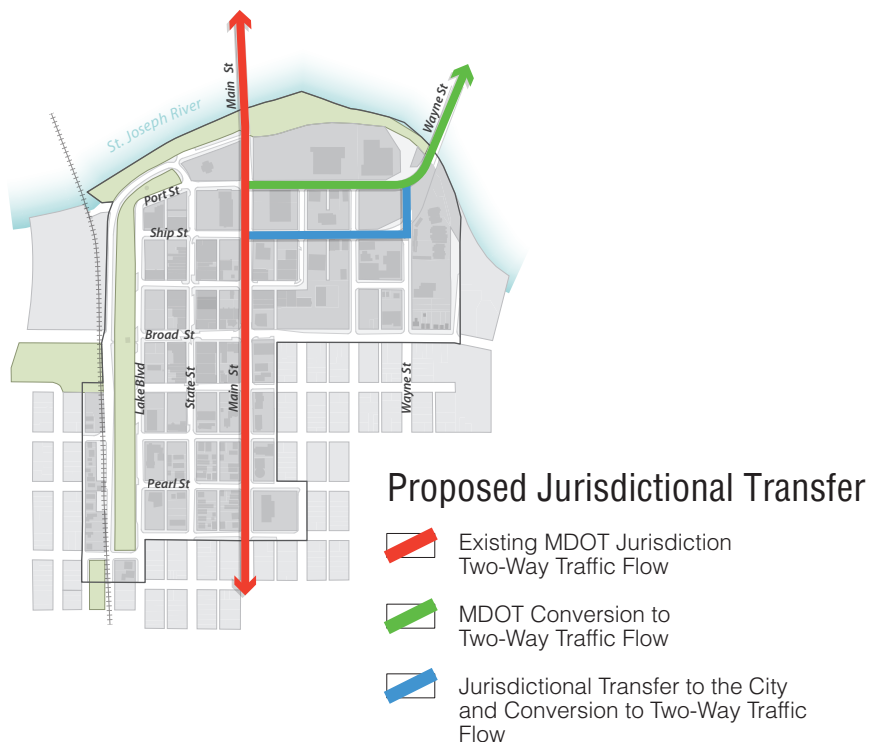
JURISDICTION

While the City has jurisdiction of most Downtown roadways, three of the most important are under the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT): Main Street, Port Street east of Main, and Ship Street east of Main. These roadways are high capacity and carry significant traffic. Cooperation with MDOT is essential to addressing issues and make improvements along these roadways. The City should work with MDOT to address potential improvements, enhanced pedestrian crosswalks, and maintenance, with particular focus on Main Street between Broad Street and the St. Joseph River.



Two-way Traffic & Ship Street Jurisdictional Transfer

The City should examine the potential for converting Port and Ship Streets from one-way to two-way traffic flow. The concept involves a jurisdictional transfer of Ship Street from MDOT to the City of St. Joseph, converting both Port and Ship Streets to two-way traffic flow, and reconfiguring the intersection at Ship and Wayne. Ship Street should be redesigned with a “road diet”, narrowing the roadway width, adding bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and extensive streetscaping. Reconfiguration and improvements to Ship Street should be completed by MDOT prior to jurisdictional transfer.





BOAT ACCESS

Access to Downtown is also provided along the St. Joseph River by nearby public and private marinas. However, no public boat moorings are located along the south riverbank. The provision of a water taxi location is currently being explored for this section of the river by Cornerstone Alliance, Berrien County's economic development organization. Improving boat access will enable boating visitors to more easily travel Downtown and better connect St. Joseph with its defining waterways.

The City should work with the Army Corps of Engineers to identify potential locations for a public marina and boat moorings, taking into consideration existing boat movement patterns and cargo ship routes. The following locations should be considered:

- ✱ **Water taxi/pick-up drop-off** - Directly west of the Main Street bridge for public boat ties or moorings. This could serve as a passenger pick up/drop off location where water taxis could parallel park.
- ✱ **Water taxi/pick-up drop-off** - The segment of riverfront east of the Main Street bridge along the County Courthouse property for a public marina and boat moorings.
- ✱ **New public marina** – immediately east of Main Street bridge where opportunity exists to cut into shoreline to prevent interference with cargo shipping operations.

In the short-term, the City should coordinate with private marinas in Downtown to explore offering temporary spaces for public boat parking. Additionally, the City should explore pedestrian improvements, transit options, and water taxis to better connect Downtown to the City's West Basin Marina.

AMTRAK

Regional rail access is provided by an Amtrak Station in Downtown, located adjacent to the Whirlpool Compass Fountain below the bluff. Amtrak operates three trains through the station, providing daily service to various destinations in Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois, including Grand Rapids and Chicago. In 2017, approximately 14,000 riders got on or off trains at the station.

Rail access is a valuable asset for Downtown, providing regional access without the use of a car. However, existing train schedules and connections can make it inconvenient to use. For example, there is no round trip daily service that would enable visitors to use the train to spend a day in St. Joseph. The City should work with Amtrak to promote rail access as part of tourism throughout the year. Encouraging individuals to travel Downtown via train will help reduce the burden on parking and emphasize St. Joseph as a railway destination. The City should also consider partnership opportunities, such as a promotional deal that provides discounts for Downtown attractions or restaurants for railroad passengers.

Parking in Downtown

Parking is crucial to the success of downtowns. It enables activity and vibrancy by allowing individuals to easily access and spend time in an area. As a major destination, parking is critical for Downtown St. Joseph and must accommodate the needs of a diverse group of users. This includes full time residents, week-day employees, seasonal vacationers, and visitors during events. Parking demand in Downtown dramatically changes throughout the day, week, and year. This requires a comprehensive approach to parking that is flexible and responsive to shifting needs.

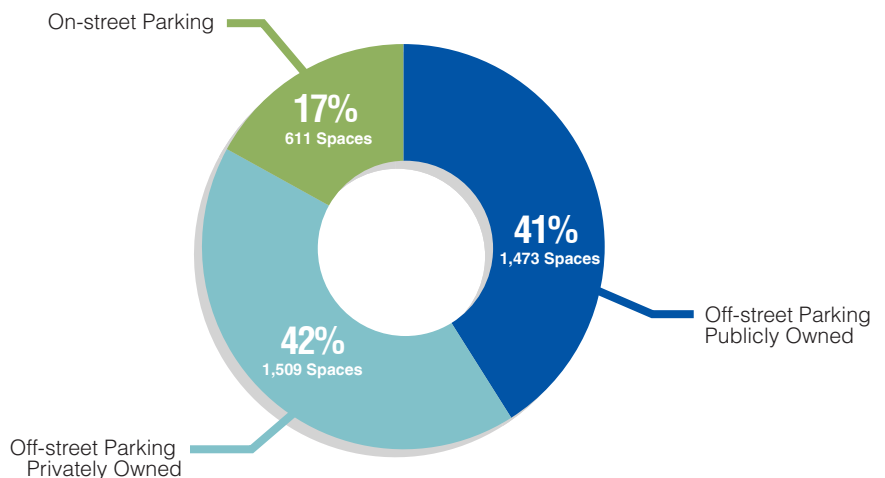
Parking in any successful downtown must be conveniently located, easy to access and identify, provided in sufficient quantity, but designed and located in manner so as not to dominate the landscape visually. Parking in downtown should consist of an appropriate mix of on-street spaces prioritized for customers and shorter visits, off-street public and private surface lots, and where appropriate, parking structures. Parking lots and structures intended to serve the needs of all day, multiple hour visits should generally not be located on key sites within the State Street Downtown Core.

PARKING SUPPLY & DEMAND

Downtown parking includes a combination of on-street spaces and off-street surface lots, both public and private. Two surveys were conducted to analyze parking demand and utilization throughout the year. An off-season weekday survey was conducted in March of 2019, followed by a summer season weekend survey conducted in July of 2019. Based upon the location of public parking, surveys were conducted within the State Street Downtown Core, East Main Campus Subarea, Residential Transition Subarea, and Beach Front Area.

The surveyed subareas contain 3,593 total spaces, comprising 17 percent on-street public parking (611 spaces), 41 percent off-street public parking (1,473 spaces), and 42 percent off-street private parking (1,509 spaces). On-street spaces include some of the most sought-after parking in Downtown, particularly along State Street and Lake Boulevard. Public parking is free year-round and includes all day and 2-hour spaces with restrictions varying by lot and time of year. Berrien County has four surface lots making up 31 percent of Downtown parking, including lots at Silver Beach and the County Courthouse.

Parking Inventory Allocation by Type





Existing Parking

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ All Day Parking | ■ 15-Minute Parking |
| ■ Two-Hour Parking | ■ Public Pay to Park |
| ■ Two-Hour: Memorial Day to Labor Day | ■ Private Parking |

Winter Off-Season Parking Observations & Survey

Parking observations for the winter off-season were made in February, March, and April, 2019. This included observations at the Magical Ice Festival on February 2, prior to the DPSC meeting on February 6, and prior to the Visioning Workshop on April 25. In addition, a survey of parking utilization was conducted on Tuesday, March 26 between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM. Weather during this survey was sunny with temperatures in the low 40's. This is colder than average for this time of year and may have contributed to lower utilization counts during the survey.

The peak demand period during the survey occurred at 1:00 pm with a system-wide utilization rate of 39 percent. While this may be lower than usual due to the cold weather, other observations indicated that parking was frequently below 50 percent utilization during the winter months and could accommodate additional capacity. The greatest parking demand was recorded on State and Pleasant Streets as well as in the surface parking lots on Ship Street between Main Street and Lake Boulevard. The Berrien County Courthouse experienced utilization above 85 percent during the off-season survey, indicating a consistent demand for parking at this facility.



Off-Season Parking Survey (March 2019)



Key Takeaway

Parking supply exceeds demand during the winter, late fall, and early spring. Parking lots generally have capacity to support additional parking demand, with the exception of the Berrien County Courthouse parking lot north of Port Street.



Summer Season Parking Observations & Survey

Parking observations for the summer season were made in May, June, July, and August, 2019. This included observations at Antiques on the Bluff (May 5), prior to the June 5 DPSC meeting, at Krasl Art Fair (June 13), at Chalk the Block (Aug. 3), and prior to the Joint Boards & Commissions Meeting (Aug. 7). In addition, a survey of parking utilization was conducted on Saturday, July 20. The weather on this day was extremely hot, with people warned to avoid spending time outside due to the heat and humidity. As a result, utilization counts for the survey are lower than other weekends observed during the summer months. Additional visits indicated that public parking in Downtown was frequently at or near full capacity.

During both the parking survey and additional visits it was observed that parking east of Main Street was either less crowded or took longer to reach full utilization. Generally, drivers sought parking spaces west of Main Street that are closer to key destinations within Downtown before utilizing facilities further east. This limits parking demand from being evenly distributed within Downtown. Main Street is considered unsafe and unfriendly to pedestrians which discourages drivers from parking in lots that would require they cross the roadway to reach their destination.



Summer Season Parking Survey (July 2019)

0 - 50%	71 - 85%
51 - 70%	86 - 100%

Key Takeaway

Parking facilities are fully utilized during the summer season and are frequently at or near capacity. Parking east of Main Street is less utilized and offers an opportunity to redistribute parking demand.



DOWNTOWN PARKING FACILITIES

As an exciting and vibrant activity hub, employment center, and local and regional destination, there will always be demand for parking in Downtown St. Joseph. At the same time, the City's seasonal tourism results in a constant ebb and flow, with demand relatively low in the off-season and high during the peak summer months. This creates a unique challenge for St. Joseph; how does the City achieve its vision for a dense, active, pedestrian-focused district while meeting parking demand? And should the City invest in parking facilities to meet seasonal peak demand, when those facilities may be underutilized during the off-season?

This section provides a flexible approach that allows the City to address parking Downtown while balancing those challenges. This includes recommended improvements to existing facilities and regulations that will improve the efficiency, distribution, and management of parking in Downtown. These are complemented by potential locations for future facilities and strategies to maximize parking capacity while accommodating desirable new infill development in key locations throughout Downtown.

Ultimately, parking is a critical concern that will need to be regularly reassessed as Downtown continues to grow and evolve. The identified strategies and recommendations are intended to provide the City with the tools to address parking comprehensively; meeting the demand while adhering the community's vision for Downtown.

Accessible Parking (ADA)

The City should carefully inventory the number and location of designated accessible parking spaces to ensure Downtown is accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessible spaces must connect to the shortest accessible route to the accessible building entrance or facility they serve. If a parking facility serves multiple buildings or accessible entrances, accessible parking spaces should be dispersed to enable people to park near as many accessible entrances as possible.



Parking Requirements

To prevent unnecessarily large parking lots, accommodate contemporary development practices, and balance the pedestrian environment with the need to accommodate the automobile, parking requirements must be carefully examined. In general, the City's approach to regulating the number of required spaces is appropriate, although some minor revisions may be needed.

The Downtown (D) zoning district only requires parking for residential and lodging/accommodation uses. Uses such as restaurants and retail shops rely on public parking lots and on-street parking. This is a very standard practice for regulating parking for uses in a downtown. However, an examination of the City's zoning ordinance shows that parking requirements for multi-family, retail, and personal services uses are a bit higher than typical national practice and consideration should be given to reducing the standards.

New multi-family development should be reduced from 1.5 to 1.25 per unit in the D district, and parking for retail and personal services should be reduced from 1/200 to 1/250. Although these commercial standards won't impact the D district, it will right size parking requirements for the districts surrounding downtown as new development occurs.

Some existing residential properties are non-conforming and do not provide a sufficient number of parking spaces to accommodate tenants. As a result, these residents park overnight in public lots. As part of an overall parking strategy, the City should consider changes to overnight parking regulations and consider a fee-based permit program to accommodate resident overnight use of public parking in a designated lot.

Parking Enforcement

Downtown parking regulations are enforced using a dedicated enforcement vehicle that monitors and identifies parking violations. The primary goal of enforcement is to create turnover by ensuring that drivers adhere to the specified parking time limits and restrictions. Because Downtown does not have paid parking, enforcement is the only method to create turnover and ensure parking spaces are regularly available to people entering Downtown.

The City's enforcement technology produces a robust data set regarding parking and enforcement. The City should utilize this data as a valuable resource to more closely monitor parking demand and utilization. This could include monthly parking 'dashboards' that provide the following information:

- * Hourly systemwide parking utilization
- * Revenue generated by each facility and/or street segment
- * Turnover rate of off-street facilities and/or street segments
- * Facilities and street segments with the highest number of violations

This information should inform parking rate increase and decreases, enforcement routes, and other parking and mobility management decisions and policies.

Paid Parking Strategy

The City should establish a strategy for paid parking in certain areas of Downtown St. Joseph. Paid parking will help create parking turnover, better distribute parking, and fund necessary maintenance and improvements. The City should utilize a demand-based pricing model where prices are increased for high-demand facilities and decreased for low-demand facilities. This encourages drivers to park in lower-cost, underutilized facilities with the aim of achieving an 85 percent occupancy rate. Requiring drivers to pay for parking in certain areas will ensure the efficiency, safety, and quality of parking options Downtown.

The City should explore paid parking strategies and utilize test periods or pilot programs to measure the success of a chosen strategy in guiding parking demand. The strategy must be flexible based upon when and where parking is in the highest demand and could be applied during specific times of the year.

After a designated period, the strategy should be reviewed to determine if rates need to be adjusted or applied to different facilities. The City should consider the cost by location as well as the duration or time limit for parking in specific spaces to ensure appropriate turnover.

In addition, residents should be provided with discounted rates that will ensure a paid parking strategy does not discourage them from patronizing Downtown. This could be accomplished through a permitting program that enables free parking for residents; a license registration program that charges residents annually or quarterly for parking dues, or a rebate program that reimburses residents for the cost of parking over a set time period. These programs should be integrated with the paid parking strategy and utilize new or emerging technologies where applicable.

In conjunction with possible time limits and duration restrictions based on parking location, the following parking rates pilot program could be considered:

- * \$2 per hour on-street parking along State Street north of Market Street; Lake Boulevard from Park Street to State Street; and west of Main Street on Ship Street, Pleasant Street, Broad Street, and Elm Street, June through September.
- * \$2 per hour parking for lots along Lake Boulevard and State Street between Elm Street and Market Street, June through September.
- * Reduced rate/free parking for residents at these facilities year-round.
- * Maintain free parking for all other facilities Downtown.










Parking Benefits District

Parking benefits districts require that revenue generated from parking is dedicated to improvements within that area. This can include maintenance of parking facilities, pedestrian enhancements, and beautification efforts. As a component of the paid parking strategy, the City should establish a parking benefits district that requires at least 80 percent of parking revenue be dedicated to capital improvement projects within Downtown. Projects that should be prioritized include surface parking landscaping, lot restriping, updating parking signage and wayfinding, pedestrian enhancements, shared parking leases, and other mobility initiatives.



Example Paid Parking Strategy

-  Parking Benefits District
-  \$2/hr. On-street Parking; June through September
-  \$2/hr. Surface Parking; June through September
-  Free Year-round Parking
-  Paid Parking Below Bluff



Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is the application of strategies, policies, or programs to reduce travel demand or to redistribute parking throughout the transportation system. TDM's can be extremely effective in managing parking in downtown districts while providing more transportation options for employees, visitors, and residents. Based upon existing facilities and demand, the City should consider the following TDM strategies.

Shared Parking

Shared parking allows multiple distinct uses to share the same parking facility. This decreases the overall amount of parking in an area by optimizing facilities for multiple properties as opposed to reserving them for individual businesses. Public surface parking in Downtown is already shared; however, several centrally located private facilities remain underutilized.

The City should initiate shared parking agreements to balance parking demand in Downtown St. Joseph. During the peak summer demand periods, the City should explore lease agreements with the owners of certain key facilities to make them publicly available or increase the time period they allow public parking.

Signage & Wayfinding

While residents and frequent visitors may know the ins and outs of parking Downtown, it can be confusing for those who are unfamiliar with the location, time limits, and hours of enforcement. Signage and wayfinding are extremely effective in guiding drivers to appropriate parking facilities and distributing demand system wide.

The City should create a robust parking signage and wayfinding program for publicly available parking facilities. Sign features should be designed to accommodate motorists and pedestrians and guide those entering Downtown to specific parking facilities. This should include updates to existing signage on public parking lots to more clearly state regulations, time limits, and enforcement.

As a component of wayfinding for parking, the City should explore technology that will inform drivers of the availability of parking spaces at different facilities. This could include a digital board with numbers or signage that can be updated to indicate certain lots are full. This will improve circulation and congestion by discouraging drivers from entering lots that are at capacity.

Parking Communication Strategies

Digital information can assist visitors in understanding their parking options. In addition to physical signage, the City should create a parking information page on their website. This could provide information to drivers ahead of time that will inform their routes to Downtown, such as:

- ✱ The location of publicly available on- and off-street parking
- ✱ Hours of enforcement
- ✱ Information about price (or timed regulations)
- ✱ Links to information about active transportation options or other mobility initiatives
- ✱ Available spaces by facility



Managing Employee Parking

One of the biggest issues downtowns face is business owners and employees parking in prime spaces, effectively reducing the availability of the most convenient parking meant primarily for customers. The City should work with the Downtown Development Authority and St. Joseph Today to manage employee parking in the State Street Downtown Core. This should include identifying specific public lots where employees should park and discouraging employees from parking in on-street spaces north of Elm Street and west of Main Street. Outside of the State Street Downtown Core, parking for Downtown employees is sufficient and does not impact public parking demand.

Remote Parking & Shuttle Services

While St. Joseph is generally able to accommodate parking needs, there are some days where parking demand exceeds the available spaces, such as busy summer weekends and during special events and festivals. In the past, the City has provided remote parking facilities outside of the downtown area, and shuttle services, when capacity is anticipated to exceed parking supply in the Downtown area. The City should investigate providing these services on an as-needed basis. Potential locations for remote parking could include St. Joseph High School, larger employers along Hilltop Road, or religious institutions, depending on coordination with private property owners.

In addition, the City should consider providing a seasonal weekend shuttle service on the perimeter of Downtown to connect major destinations with underutilized parking facilities. For example, a shuttle with stops at Silver Beach and State Street could connect with public parking lots east of Main Street, helping to better distributing parking demand. This shuttle could be free to ride and paid for as part of the parking benefits district.

Fee In Lieu Of Parking

Fee in lieu of parking allows a developer to pay a one-time fee in place of providing parking as required by the zoning ordinance. The City should explore developing a fee in lieu of parking program for new development within the State Street Downtown Core and East Main Campus Subarea. There is no universally established amount for fees in lieu of parking because they must account for a variety of factors, including construction and maintenance costs as well as parking demand that may be generated by new development. If the City creates a fee in lieu of parking program a schedule of fees would need to be examined and established at that time.



EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Autonomous Vehicles

Autonomous Vehicles (AV's) embody a wide range of emerging technologies including advance driver assistance systems which improve safety by controlling certain driver functions, and fully autonomous vehicles which will eventually have the capacity to operate without human input. As these technologies continue to improve and become mainstream, opportunities to redesign the street system with more safe and narrow streets may emerge.

It is estimated that AVs have the potential to reduce parking demand by 40 percent by the year 2050. This shift could possibly open a significant portion of land area, currently dedicated to parking, to more intense development. To ensure St. Joseph remains up to date on recommended parking minimums as AVs become more mainstream, the City should regularly check sources such as the Institute of Transportation Engineers to ensure that requirements are relevant. This should include consideration for AVs and related best practices in the design of new parking facilities in Downtown.

Electric Vehicles

It is anticipated that most autonomous vehicles will be electric vehicles (EVs) in the future. EVs are becoming more prevalent as technology reliability and battery capacity increase to provide greater range per charge. There are several steps the City can take to enhance EV infrastructure in Downtown, including:

- ✱ Dedicating spots in public parking lots for EV charging stations.
- ✱ Working with businesses and property owners to dedicate a portion of parking spaces to no- or low-emission vehicles and EV charging stations.
- ✱ Ensuring City codes and ordinances are written in a way so as not to prohibit the installation of electrical charging stations.

The City should also consider if charging stations provided within public parking lots should be complimentary, provided as a fee-based service, or privately managed.

FUTURE PARKING FACILITIES

Both public and private surface parking lots were identified as opportunities for infill development, as detailed in the Land Use Chapter. However, using existing surface parking lots as sites for new infill development would eliminate existing parking spaces that would have to be provided elsewhere in or near Downtown. For example, the development concept provided on page 36 for corners of Lake Boulevard and Broad Street would eliminate approximately 114 parking spaces. The development of these properties is consistent with the community's vision for Downtown St. Joseph, but as the City seeks new development and redevelopment within Downtown, eliminated parking spaces must be appropriately replaced with new facilities to offset the loss.

In addition to the previously discussed strategies to manage parking demand within the existing system, the City should also consider the construction of parking garages in Downtown. Parking structures help to consolidate parking vertically, freeing up surface lots for development. Using modern technologies and best practices, parking garages are increasingly safe and efficient for cars and pedestrians.

The City should consider construction of parking structures at the following locations:

- ✱ On the public parking lots on the southwest and southeast corners of the intersection of State Street and Elm Street. These properties are centrally located with access to State Street and would help buffer neighborhoods to the south.
- ✱ On the public parking lots on the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Ship Street. These properties are centrally located near State Street and have high visibility and access along Main Street.
- ✱ As part of the proposed redevelopment concept for the Silver Beach Hotel property, located on the western portion of the site, with first floor commercial uses fronting State Street and parking to the rear and on upper levels.
- ✱ On the Berrien County Courthouse's surface parking lot bounded by Port, Church, Ship, and Wayne Streets. This deck would help to offset parking lost as a result of the proposed development of the Courthouse's surface parking lot along Main Street west of the Courthouse building.
- ✱ Near the Amtrak station below the bluff. A parking garage at this location could accommodate a significant number of spaces and provide convenient parking for beach goers.



Downtown Public Parking Facilities

- Public Surface Lots Targeted for Potential Infill
- Potential Public Parking Garage Location
- Expand Existing Public Parking
- ➡ Potential Shuttle Route
- Potential Shuttle Stop



Pedestrian & Bicycle Mobility

St. Joseph strives to be a community in which walking and biking are vital components of the transportation system. The City has invested in capital improvements, infrastructure updates, and grant programs in the past to enhance pedestrian mobility. These efforts should be continued to provide different ways to get around Downtown and encourage healthy living through enhanced mobility.

ACTIVE TRANSIT PLAN

Being one of the region's premiere destinations, St. Joseph is ideal for active modes of transportation. The small size of Downtown combined with the influx of summertime users lends itself well to active transportation modes for internal trips and nearby travel. The City should develop a city-wide active transportation plan, with emphasis given to Downtown and Silver Beach. The City could also coordinate with adjacent municipalities to explore development of a regional active transportation plan. This process should consider both traditional and emerging modes of active transportation, such as bike-share programs.

PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

The pedestrian experience in Downtown benefits from a compact development pattern and complete sidewalk network. In areas, walking is comfortable and pleasant, such as along State Street. In other areas, the prominence of surface parking and extensive pavement creates a less enjoyable experience. In particular, the high traffic volumes and wide pavement of Main Street make pedestrians feel unsafe.

The City should aim to foster a consistent, high quality pedestrian experience throughout Downtown. Emphasis should be given to the identified priority pedestrian corridors. These roadways are best positioned to benefit from improvements and provide an enjoyable pedestrian experience. This should include efforts to create a sense of safety by buffering pedestrians from car movement as well as screening unattractive areas and views. The pedestrian experience should be a key consideration of development opportunities, capital improvements, and other projects that impact the pedestrian realm.



SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks are the foundation of the pedestrian realm and must be accessible, appealing, and well-maintained. The City administers a bi-annual sidewalk replacement program to keep its sidewalks in safe, useful condition, and address emergency repairs and on-going maintenance. The City should continue to budget for regular sidewalk maintenance in Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

To ensure all pedestrians, including persons with disabilities, can easily move with space to “pass and pause,” the City should maintain a six-foot unobstructed walking zone for sidewalks throughout the Downtown. This zone should be consistent, linear, and free of street furniture, store signage, planters, and other items that may obstruct the flow of pedestrians. Walking zones should be complimented by buffer zones that separate pedestrians from cars and provide areas for outdoor seating and street amenities. The City should review and consider necessary sidewalk expansions as part of capital improvement and streetscaping projects. Where appropriate, the City should continue to use sidewalk bump-outs to expand the pedestrian realm, decrease the distance for crossing streets, and provide space for additional amenities.

CROSSWALKS

While most intersections in Downtown have standard line pavement crosswalks, many are faded and some have no markings to delineate pedestrian right-of-way. The City should ensure that all intersections in Downtown are improved with high-visibility crosswalks for all approaches and are regularly maintained to ensure they are clearly marked. All crosswalks should also comply with ADA standards to maximize mobility for all persons with disabilities.

In consideration with other urban design improvements, the City should consider unique pavers and custom treatments that will enhance the visibility and appearance of crosswalks at key intersections along State Street, Lake Boulevard, and Broad Street. In addition, the City should install semi-permanent pedestrian crossing signs that are located within the right-of-way at Lake Boulevard and Broad Street atop the Bluff, the bottom of the Bluff stairs at Vine Street, and at Court Street and Port Street in front of the Courthouse.

INTERSECTION DESIGN

The design of signalized intersections affects how drivers and pedestrians interact and can have a significant impact on safety for all users. The City should review intersection design throughout Downtown, particularly along Main Street, to identify potential improvements that will increase safety and comfort for pedestrians. This could include minimized curb radii, narrow travel lanes, bump outs, high-visibility crosswalks, leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrian signal heads with countdown timers, and pedestrian refuge medians where appropriate.



BICYCLE AMENITIES

In addition to providing the necessary infrastructure, the City should also provide related amenities that will enable cyclists to travel to and spend time Downtown. This should include public bicycle racks at key destinations through the Downtown and beachfront area. The City should encourage developers to provide bicycle parking for their properties and consider cyclist accessibility. In addition, the City should explore supporting amenities like public bicycle repair stations at key locations in Downtown, along the bluff, and near the beachfront.



BICYCLE NETWORK

The City should continue to be proactive in establishing and expanding its trails and bike facilities to connect residential neighborhoods with Downtown and Silver Beach/lakefront area. There are currently multiuse paths along Silver Beach and throughout the beachfront area, along the St. Joseph Riverfront, and on top of the bluff. In addition, Lake Boulevard and the Main Street bridge are part of U.S. Bicycle Route 35, a nationally designated bikeway that extends from New Buffalo to Sault Ste. Marie.

On-street bike routes in Downtown should utilize local streets that are low volume and low speed. These should be strategically planned to connect with the existing Lake Boulevard bike lane, the river trail system, river crossings, and key destinations. On-street routes should avoid roadways that are too narrow to support designated bike lanes due to on-street parking or a high speed and volume of automobile traffic. This may require the use of shared bike lanes, or sharrows, that designate a preferred route where cars and bicycles share the road.

The City should also seek extension of the existing riverfront trail south along the Morrison Channel and St. Joseph River. If extended to the City's border, this could eventually be used to connect to regional trail systems along the waterway.

The City's 2016 Master Plan identifies both bike routes and bike lanes within the Downtown Study Area. This includes a cross town bike route on Church Street as well as future bike lanes on Main Street, Broad Street, Ship Street, Port Street, and Niles Avenue. Based upon roadway widths and the configuration of on-street parking, the establishment of dedicated bike lanes on these roadways may be infeasible and or create unsafe conditions, and is therefore not recommended.

The City should consider on-street bike routes on the following roads:

- * Shared bike lanes along the Designated U.S. Bicycle Route, including segments of both Lake Boulevard and Port Street east of Main Street.
- * Shared bike lanes along Pearl Street from Lake Boulevard to Langley Avenue (connecting south).
- * Shared bike lanes along Court Street from Pearl Street to Port Street, providing access to the Berrien County Courthouse and St. Joseph Riverfront. This would include an off-street segment from Broad Street to Pleasant Street through the public plaza at Court and Pleasant.

The City should also partner with MDOT to make improvements to the Main Street bridge that would better support bike mobility.





Pedestrian & Bicycle Mobility

- Existing Multi Use Trail
- Potential Multi Use Trail Extension
- Designated US Bicycle Route 35
- St. Joseph - Benton Harbor Amtrak Station
- Priority Pedestrian Corridor
- Potential Local Bicycle Route
- Strengthened Ped/Bike Connections
- MDOT Signal

- 1** Create a pedestrian crossing at Court/Port to provide a safe crossing between the Courthouse and a potential parking garage south of Port. This could include a pedestrian activated signal or semi-permeant bollards.
- 2** Create a shared pedestrian/bicycle pathway through the parking lot on Broad Street east of Main Street, connecting to the plaza located at Pleasant Street and Court Street.
- 3** Improve safety at the bottom of the bluff by making crossing enhancements at the intersection of Broad and Vine Streets.
- 4** Widen sidewalks on the Park Street bridge to encourage this as a pedestrian route to Silver Beach.

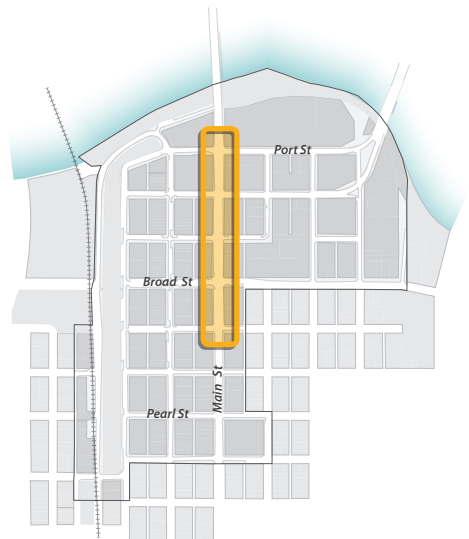
Main Street Corridor

The Main Street Corridor is critical to the vitality of Downtown St. Joseph. This roadway is the primary gateway by which people enter and experience Downtown and few trips do not start with, end with, or include Main Street. The corridor cuts through the center of the downtown area, carrying over 23,000 vehicles per day. As a state route, Main Street is under the jurisdiction of MDOT and is optimized for automobile travel. The combination of four travel lanes, two parking lanes, and the resulting wide expanse of pavement encourages drivers to speed up, creating an unpleasant and often unsafe pedestrian experience.

This puts the City at a disadvantage; where many other communities have a walkable district and local street at the center of their Downtown, St. Joseph has a very busy state route. The corridor effectively bisects Downtown, acting as a barrier between areas east and west of Main Street. This affects how pedestrians move within the area, the distribution of uses, and the overall appearance of Downtown.

Improving the character, appearance, and pedestrian safety of the Main Street corridor is essential to fostering a cohesive, walkable downtown. Understanding the limitations this roadway faces, Main Street is unlikely to become an active shopping district like State Street. However, efforts to address walkability and safety as well as enhance the pedestrian experience along Main Street will dramatically impact the character and functionality of Downtown and is essential to better connecting the areas east and west of Main Street.

The City should coordinate with MDOT to explore improvements to the corridor that will elevate Main Street as a welcoming gateway that unifies Downtown St. Joseph. This will require close coordination to discuss the design, location, cost, and maintenance of potential improvement concepts. Although challenging at the onset due to MDOT's desire to move traffic and the City's desire to create "sense of place" and pedestrian safety, efforts to improve the corridor are essential and worthy of efforts to do so.



Main Street Improvement Concepts

The following includes concepts and potential improvement projects for the Main Street Corridor. These are intended to provide a visualization of how Main Street could be improved to provide a more pedestrian-friendly and welcoming environment. The implementation of these improvements would require close coordination with MDOT to discuss design, location, engineering, cost, maintenance, and other factors.

A gateway feature north of Port Street will prominently announce entry into Downtown for those traveling south along the Corridor.

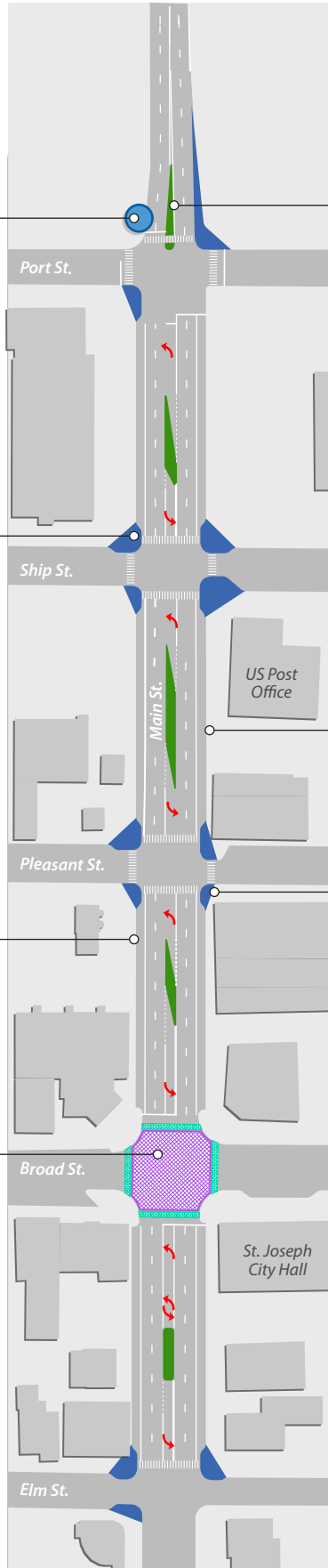


Crosswalks should be high visibility and clearly marked to improve pedestrian safety and comfort when crossing the roadway. Decorative and artistic crosswalk treatments should be considered, coordinating with Downtown partners like St. Joseph Today and the Krasl Art Center.



Curb cuts should be limited along Main Street. The City should encourage access from rear alleys and support cross access between adjacent properties.

Bold decorative improvements at Main and Broad will elevate this intersection as a central entry point to Downtown. This could include unique pavement treatments and decorative painting of the entire intersection as well as other elements that incorporate St. Joseph's history and culture. These improvements have been shown to slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety.



Landscaped medians will soften the appearance of Main Street by reducing pavement and adding greenery. These medians would not disrupt the flow of traffic and are consistent with existing medians along the corridor south of Broad Street.



Sidewalks should be consistently maintained throughout the year, including the removal of debris and snow plowing during winters months.

Curb bump outs and enhanced crossing treatments will improve safety by clearly marking where pedestrians have right-of-way and decreasing the crossing distance.



Improvements

- Proposed Curb Extensions
- Proposed Landscaped Medians
- Gateway Feature





CHAPTER 5

URBAN DESIGN & CHARACTER

The character and design of a downtown can define its success, influencing the way individuals understand and interact with that space. Due to the City's continuous efforts, Downtown St. Joseph is already an established, charming district that offers pedestrian amenities and a comfortable atmosphere. However, opportunities exist to further enhance and expand this environment, strengthening the Downtown's reputation as a welcoming and exciting space for residents and visitors. This chapter identifies urban design improvements for both public and private property and outlines strategies to elevate the character of Downtown St. Joseph.

Streetscaping

Past Downtown projects have produced beautiful and inviting streetscapes, such as those along State and Broad Streets. The City should build upon this foundation, coordinating improvements to the public realm that will reinforce the character of Downtown. The effectiveness of streetscape improvements will require a measured approach that is responsive to the intended character of each roadway.

The following streetscape strategy designates all roadways within Downtown into four streetscape tiers based upon traffic and activity, jurisdiction, adjacent uses, and other factors. These should guide the level of effort for streetscaping Downtown and inform the projects and improvements that should be considered for each roadway.



TIER 1 STREETSCAPE

Tier 1 Streetscapes should receive the greatest level of effort to create inviting, pedestrian oriented environments. These streets should be fully improved with amenities that make them comfortable for pedestrians and create exciting, active public spaces. This should include unobstructed thoroughways, benches, lighting, street trees, flower beds and planters, public art and interactive installations, awnings and banners, and other amenities that foster an engaging pedestrian experience. Tier 1 Streetscapes should ensure safe and efficient mobility for all modes of transportation while prioritizing the pedestrian realm.



TIER 2 STREETSCAPE

Tier 2 Streetscapes must ensure the efficient movements of cars while providing a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists. These streets will not have the same level of activity as Tier 1 Streetscapes but should be a focus for efforts to enhance their character and appearance. This should include, provided sufficient right-of-way exists, landscaping and street trees, flower beds and planters, lighting, benches, regular pedestrian crossings, and other amenities that contribute to the pedestrian experience. Improvements should ensure cyclists and pedestrians feel safe and comfortable moving along and across these roadways while enable efficient movement of cars. Design elements from Tier 1 Streetscapes should be incorporated where appropriate to create a consistent brand in Downtown.

Streetwalls

Streetwall describes a continuous row of buildings, side-by-side, that are located at or near the sidewalk with little or no side yards. Continuous streetwalls create a sense of enclosure that is comfortable and walkable for pedestrians. State Street between Elm Street and Ship Street has a great streetwall that contributes to the appeal of Downtown. Elsewhere in Downtown streetwalls are inconsistent with large gaps between buildings, substantial setbacks, and surface parking that is not screened.

As a component of development and reinvestment, the City should establish a continuous streetwall throughout the State Street Downtown Core and East Main Campus Subareas. In particular, the City should focus new development toward infill opportunities that will reduce streetwall gaps, particularly along Lake Boulevard, State Street, and Main Street. In lieu of new infill development, the City should consider the following:

- ✱ Provide incentives to screen private parking lots and screen city-owned surface parking.
- ✱ Consider streetscape elements that fill streetwall gaps. Examples might include community sculptures, landscaping, or public art.
- ✱ Consider zoning code revisions that will eliminate front yard setbacks and move parking to the rear of properties.

Streetwall

Non-Continuous



Continuous



Lower Broad Pedestrian Experiential Improvements

Broad Street below the bluff is an essential pedestrian connection between the Downtown Core and Silver Beach. Regularly busy during the summer months, this route should be a priority for pedestrian improvements and amenities that foster an active and exciting pedestrian experience. This should include beautification treatments to reduce the sparse appearance of the roadway, such as landscaping, flower beds and street trees, unique pavement treatments, pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches, and other amenities.

In addition, the City should seek to provide unique and interactive experiences that activate the area and make Broad Street not just a route but a place. The Whirlpool Compass Fountain is a great example of this kind of use. Additional improvements could include public art, interactive installations, outdoor seating areas, publicly available yard games or chess tables, children's play areas, or other amenities. These would contribute to the character of Broad Street, foster social interaction, and invite people to engage with their surroundings.



Building Façades & Storefronts

The City should also ensure building façades, awnings, storefronts, and signage meet preferred standards and do not detract from the pedestrian experience. Service and loading areas should be located on the rear of the property and appropriately screened. Mechanical equipment and HVAC systems should not be visible from the public right-of-way. The City should work with property owners and developers to ensure building are attractive in design the entire length and height of the building's front façade. The City should also consider establishing programs to incentivize façade improvements within Downtown, particularly along State Street.



Bump Outs

Bump outs are curb extensions that extend into the right-of-way to reduce the distance that pedestrians must cross, increase visibility for both vehicles and pedestrian, frame parking lanes, and slow vehicular traffic. Bump outs currently exist at most major intersections within Downtown, such as the Main and Broad Street intersection. The City should continue to implement bump outs at all primary and secondary intersections, where right-of-way widths and traffic patterns allow. For information about potential bump outs along Main Street, see the **Parking & Transportation Chapter**.

ADA Accessibility

The public right-of-way and private properties should be designed to appeal to all users and provide the same means of use by incorporating Universal Design and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards wherever possible. All sidewalks, curb-ramps, and crosswalks in the Downtown should meet the current ADA/PROWAG (Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines) for accessibility.



Crosswalks

Most intersections within the Downtown have faded crosswalks or lack markings altogether. Crosswalks should be clearly delineated at each intersection to designate the pedestrian space and catch the attention of drivers. Crosswalks using colorful paintings or unique design can offer a creative alternative to pavers. Vibrant geometric shapes can be easily visible by car for increased pedestrian safety. Work from local artists or unique designs specific to Downtown St. Joseph may be incorporated to foster local identity.

Street Furnishings

The City should continue to maintain existing pedestrian amenities including seating, bike racks, trash and recycling receptacles, street lighting, street lighting banners, and informational kiosks. To reinforce new public gathering spaces and promote outdoor seating areas, locations for additional street furnishings should be explored.

Outdoor Dining

The City should promote opportunities for restaurants to feature outdoor patios and rooftop decks, especially at locations with views of Lake Michigan or the St. Joseph River. Outdoor dining should be designed in a way that doesn't impact pedestrian circulation. The character and materials used should be in line with the character of the primary structure.

Crosswalk Improvements



Screening

Screening enhances the appearance of an area by blocking views of unattractive areas from the public right of way. This can include storage, loading and service areas, mechanical equipment, refuse and recycling bins, as well as surface parking.

The City should work with property owners and developers to ensure unattractive uses are appropriately screened within Downtown, utilizing decorative fences, landscaping, and other creative treatments. Perimeter landscaping should be required for all surface parking to reduce views of extensive paved areas while maintaining necessary sight lines.

Screened areas should include ornamental shade trees, shrubs, and grasses, as well as fencing or a continuous hedge. In addition, a landscape buffer of shade trees with an evergreen hedge and/or ornamental fencing should be provided near the property line for commercial uses and parking lots when adjacent to residential.



Parking Lot Screening & Site Landscaping





Landscaping

Landscaping helps to beautify Downtown and enhance the pedestrian environment by integrating greenery and plant life in the area. Landscaping should be incorporated throughout Downtown as part of screening and new development. This should include perimeter landscaping for surface parking lots. Landscaping should consist of native, salt-tolerant shade trees, ornamental trees, evergreens, shrubs, groundcover, and perennials. The Vail Rubber Works' property is a great example of high quality landscaping and should be highlighted as a best practice for landscaping Downtown.

Although not a preferred treatment from MDOT's perspective, the City should work with MDOT to install landscaped medians at key locations along Main Street north of Broad Street to disrupt the wide extent of pavement. These would be consistent with existing medians on Main Street to the south. This is further discussed in the **Parking & Transportation Chapter**.



Viewsheds

Viewsheds are specific vantage points that are attractive and should be preserved and enhanced. One of Downtown's strongest assets is the exceptional views of Lake Michigan, Silver Beach, the St. Joseph Lighthouse, and the St. Joseph River. Protecting these is essential and should be a key consideration for future development and reinvestment. Building upon Section 9.5 of the City's zoning ordinance (Lake Bluff Scenic View Protection Overlay District), the City should actively protect viewsheds that are critical to the character of Downtown. In addition, the City should consider additional landmarks and viewsheds that contribute to Downtown and should be protected in the future. Examples could include views of the Whirlpool Compass Fountain, the Whitcomb Tower, and the distinctive railroad bridge over the St. Joseph River.

VIEWS FROM THE BLUFF

Views from atop the Bluff are protected by the Lake Bluff Scenic View Protection Overlay District (Section 9.5 of the City's Zoning Ordinance). This includes properties north of Elm Street and west of Vine Street below the bluff. Building height within this area is limited based upon eleva-

tion to protect views from the Bluff. However, multi-family buildings constructed prior to the overlay's adoption exceed height restrictions and directly block views from Downtown.

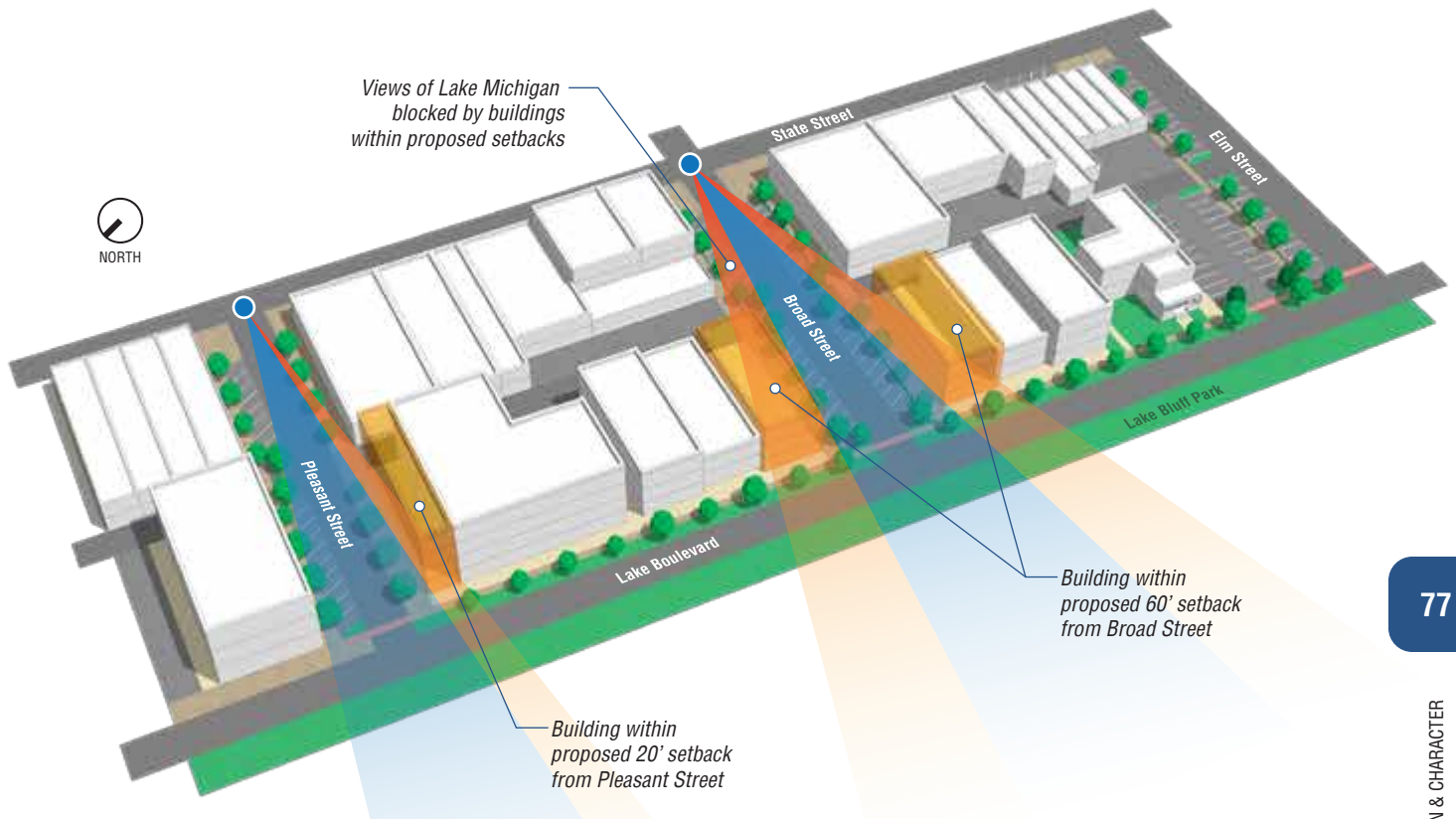
The City should continue to strictly enforce the overlay for development below the Bluff. No building should block the line of sight from any point along Lake Boulevard to Lake Michigan, the St. Joseph River, the North Pier Lighthouse, and Silver Beach. The City should update their overlay district appropriately to ensure views are preserved from Lake Street outward as a point of reference.

This should include updating or supplementing the district map with a new map that clearly defines maximum permitted heights within the district. The current map uses a system of elevation calculations that can be difficult to understand. This may be easier to understand in a simplified map that defines areas by permitted heights. Areas south of the overlay are zoned R1 – E Single-Family Detached Residence and limited to a maximum building height of 35 feet.



- No-Build Zone**
- Construction should be prohibited except for specific County and City projects
- Scenic View Protection**
- Building height regulated by Overlay District

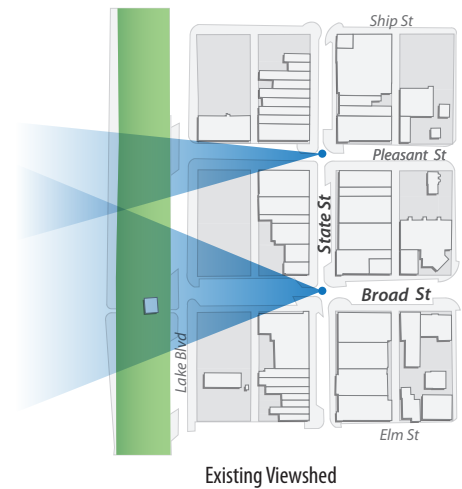
- R1-E Single Family Detached**
- 35' maximum building height
- Lake Bluff Scenic View Protection Overlay District**



VIEWS FROM STATE STREET

The City should also protect key views from State Street, specifically at the Broad Street and Pleasant Street intersections. Discussed as part of Development Opportunity Sites in the **Land Use & Development Chapter**, the City should require a 60 foot setback for properties Lake Boulevard and Broad Street (Site 3 & 4), to be formalized as public space. In addition, the property at Lake Boulevard and Pleasant Street (Site 5) should have a 20 foot setback. These would preserve viewsheds and prohibit a tunneling affect along Broad Street that would reduce the angle of views from State Street.

The City should also regulate the height of development on these properties to protect views from existing uses along State Street. Specifically, Sites 3 and 4 should be limited to two stories closest to Broad Street, stepping up to three stories to the north and south. This would maintain views from RyeBelles rooftop deck. Site 5 should be limited to four stories, with consideration given to potential setbacks above the second floor.



Gateway Features

The appearance of entry points or gateways into an area is crucial in determining the overall image and perception of Downtown as a whole. Incorporating gateway features can help catch the attention of passersby and visually delineate what part of the community 'is' Downtown.

Gateway features should include landscaped monument signs or archways that prominently mark entry into Downtown St. Joseph. It is important that all gateway features follow a cohesive style to foster a unified identity.

Based upon existing traffic patterns, the City should construct gateway features in the following locations:

- * Main Street north of Port Street as drivers enter off the Main Street bridge
- * Main Street where Niles Avenue and Main Street converge

- * Wayne Street where Port Street and Wayne Street converge as drivers enter from the Wayne Street Bridge
- * Broad Street and Marsh Street, coming up the hill
- * Lake Boulevard and Park Street
- * At the top of the stairs near Lake Boulevard and Broad Street. This gateway would announce Downtown's location from the beach and attract beachgoers to the Downtown Core.

The City should review the design of existing gateway features to determine if these should be updated or rebranded. If the City chooses a new design, improvements should be made to existing gateways to reflect the new style of new gateway features. This should include the existing gateway at Main Street and Broad Street as well as the signage along the St. Joseph Riverfront.

Gateway Signage





Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding compliments gateway features by directing individuals to key destinations within Downtown. The City should maintain and enhance the existing wayfinding system in order to convey a unified design theme and direct pedestrians and vehicles to community destinations, including but not necessarily limited to:

- * Krasl Art Center
- * Curious Kids' Museum
- * Curious Kid's Discovery Zone
- * John E.N. Howard Bandshell
- * Berrien County Courthouse
- * Silver Beach
- * Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library

- * St. Joseph City Hall and Police Department
- * Berrien County Administration Building
- * The Heritage Museum and Cultural Center
- * Box Factory for the Arts
- * Public parking
- * Amtrak Station

Directional signage should be placed before key intersections, with priority given to Main Street intersections with Market, Broad, and Port streets. The City should also incorporate directional signage to public parking in Downtown to improve circulation and access to existing parking options. Where appropriate, the City should incorporate pedestrian wayfinding or maps of Downtown to improve circulation for pedestrians.

Wayfinding Signage



Public Art

Downtown St. Joseph boasts numerous public art installations located throughout the area, including sculptures along Lake Boulevard, State Street, and the Margaret B. Upton Arboretum. The City should continue to maintain Downtown's existing public art while seeking opportunities for new installations. Emphasis should be given to public art that is interactive and encourages the viewer to engage with the installation. The Krasl Art Center and St. Joseph Today should be key partners in this effort.

A successful public art program took place for fifteen years before taking a hiatus in 2019. The City should consider bringing back the previous or a similar program or possibly consider the establishment of a new public art initiative for Downtown.





Existing façades with mural installation



Existing façades in Downtown St. Joseph

MURALS

Downtown St. Joseph has numerous opportunities for murals that would contribute to the area's character by increasing public art and activating blank walls or sides of buildings. The recently painted mural on the back of the St. Joseph Today building is an excellent example of a mural that creates visual interest within Downtown. St. Joseph Today is currently working to expand the program in the coming years and had a successful temporary stair mural installed on the bluff staircase in July.

The City should continue to seek the creation of murals within Downtown, with a focus on entrances of alleys, windowless walls, and the sides of buildings. This could include blank walls at the northwest corner of Elm and State Street, at the southwest corner of State and Ship, and facing northward toward the State and Port Street parking lot.



These butterflies were painted using chalk during the City's Chalk the Block event. The artwork uses forced perspective looking up the stairs to hide in plain sight, as the butterflies can only be seen from the bottom of the bluff. The City should explore additional art or installations, such as sculpture or landscaping, that uses the forced perspective along the bluff for visual interest.

Maintenance & Upkeep

The City should continue to prioritize maintenance and upkeep to ensure Downtown remains an attractive and desirable destination. With trends towards online shopping, Downtown's competitive edge is the unique experience and environment it provides. Maintaining this requires continued investments in the design, construction, programming, and maintenance of the public and private realm. This includes efforts to address potholes, cracked pavement, and worn sidewalk treatments and ensure upkeep of street furniture, amenities, and public landscaping.

ALLEY MAINTENANCE

As a component of upkeep, the City should work with property owners and businesses to ensure alleys in Downtown are well maintained. Alleys were identified by residents as a top concern given the prominence of trash cans, visual clutter, and a general lack of maintenance. To improve the appearance of alleys the City should regularly clean and clear alleys and standardize the location of trash cans requiring screening where appropriate. The City should also consider the incorporation of murals and public wall art, such as the art on the side of the HarborTown Interiors building.

Historic Preservation









Downtown contains numerous structures that are architecturally and historically significant and contribute to the district's character and unique sense of place. The City should actively seek protection of appropriate historic properties and resources within Downtown. This could include the following strategies:

- ✦ Establish a local historic designation and a register of local historic properties.
- ✦ Work with property owners to identify eligible properties that could be included on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ✦ Provide educational resources regarding historic preservation as well as available resources and programs to protect and enhance eligible properties.
- ✦ Support adaptive reuse and façade restoration of historic properties as well as salvaging and reuse of historic and architectural elements in new development.





Urban Design and Character

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Crosswalk Improvement |  | Wayfinding |
|  | Crosswalk Improvement with Bumpouts |  | Landscape or Screening |
|  | Gateway Feature |  | Landscaped Median |
|  | Improvement to Existing Signage |  | Lower Broad Pedestrian Experiential Improvements |



CHAPTER 6

ENTERTAINMENT & ACTIVITY

Downtown St. Joseph is home to a variety of recreational opportunities, attractions, gathering spaces, and events that bolster Downtown as a local and regional destination for entertainment and culture. These include, among others, Lake Michigan, Silver Beach, the St. Joseph Lighthouse, Silver Beach Carousel, the St. Joseph Riverfront, the Margaret B. Upton Arboretum, Lake Bluff Park, Krasl Art Center, and Curious Kids Museum. Together, these treasured assets foster a volume of activity in Downtown St. Joseph typically associated with larger cities. They attract seasonal visitors, support tourism, and provide residents with invaluable amenities that generate considerable excitement in Downtown throughout the year, particularly during the summer months.

As the City looks to improve upon what already makes Downtown St. Joseph a great place, efforts to preserve and enhance the attractions and recreational assets that define Downtown must be made. This should include projects to reinforce existing entertainment amenities and further strengthen the distinct sense of community pride and social interaction within Downtown. To support this vision for entertainment and activity, the City should consider the following recommendations, projects, and strategies for the existing recreational and cultural assets.

Lake Michigan & Silver Beach

As the central business district of a lakefront community, Downtown St. Joseph is defined by Lake Michigan. This includes lakeside destinations that draw visitors to Downtown, such as Silver Beach and the Whirlpool Compass Fountain, as well as related shops, restaurants, and hospitality uses. Lake Michigan is a critical component of Downtown's character, acting as a picturesque backdrop and offering unparalleled views from the top of the bluff.

The movement of pedestrians between Lake Michigan and the Downtown Core is crucial. Located slightly inland and on top of the bluff, the Downtown Core is a gateway to the beachfront area with Broad Street being the primary route. However, the pedestrian experience along this route can be inconsistent, including bare open spaces, poor sidewalk conditions, and a lack of visual interest.

The City should improve the ease and efficiency of moving down the bluff as well as the character of routes between the Downtown Core and Lake Michigan. This will promote usage of amenities below and above the lake and help attract beach-goers into the Downtown Core. To achieve this, the City should consider the following recommendations.

- * Enhance the pedestrian experience by adding street furnishings and decorative elements for visual interest. Focus should be given to the sidewalks along Broad Street below the bluff. Potential improvements could include:
 - * Pedestrian amenities and street furniture, such as benches and tables with colorful shade structures, information kiosks, trash cans, and recycling cans.
 - * A "History Walk" along Broad Street with informational posts about the history of the Downtown, City, and Silver Beach to create an engaging walking experience to and from the beach.
 - * Landscaping and street trees, potentially using native coastal plants that mimic the character of the Lake Michigan coastline.
 - * Unique pavement treatments that add vibrancy and interest.
 - * Lighting, including pedestrian-scaled fixtures and branded light poles with places for banners or flags.
- * Public art, with an emphasis on art that is interactive, incorporates local art, or provides space for rotating installations.
- * Explore opportunities for new pedestrian connections down the bluff, such as a walkway at Elm Street between the top and bottom of the bluff.
- * Upgrade the public restroom facility at the top of the stairs near Lake Boulevard and Broad Street with a contemporary design that does not obstruct views of the waterfront. A prominent gateway sign should be incorporated into the facility's structure that can be visible from Silver Beach to indicate close and easy access to the Downtown.
- * As part of wayfinding improvements, incorporate pedestrian wayfinding signage that clearly marks routes to and from the beach front area.
- * Continue to coordinate with Berrien County to identify and address issues and challenges related to the operation of Silver Beach.
- * Coordinate with Berrien County to identify duplication of services between Silver Beach and City beaches and identify opportunities for partnerships and coordination that would make beach access easier for residents and visitors.





The St. Joseph River

The St. Joseph River acts as the Downtown's second waterfront. The Margaret B. Upton Arboretum is part of the riverfront, but historically the St. Joseph River has not been as well activated as Lake Michigan. Portions of the riverfront are inaccessible due to private marinas and development. Combined with the lack of public marinas or boat slips, this creates a weak connection between the river and Downtown. Activation of the St. Joseph riverfront is an important project for residents and should be a priority to further enhance activity Downtown. To accomplish this, the City should improve boat access as well as better activate areas adjacent to the river.



Riverfront Access

Public Riverfront Property

Private Riverfront Property

BOAT ACCESS

As a coastal community in Southwest Michigan, St. Joseph has a significant boat culture. However, there is currently no direct public access to Downtown for boaters, but a water taxi is planned for the riverfront east of the bridge near the courthouse. Improving boat access will help bring additional visitors to Downtown and strengthen St. Joseph's position along the lakefront as a boating community.

To increase boat access, the City should work with the Army Corps of Engineers to identify potential locations for a public marina and boat moorings, taking into consideration existing boat movement patterns and cargo ship routes.

The following locations should be considered:

- ✱ The segment of the Arboretum directly west of the Main Street bridge for public boat ties or moorings. This could serve as a passenger pick up/drop off location where water taxis could parallel park.
- ✱ The segment of riverfront north of the County Courthouse property for a public marina, boat ties, slips, or moorings.
- ✱ In particular, the opportunity for a public transient marina directly east of the Main Street bridge should be explored. Combined with a pedestrian connection from the potential redevelopment at the intersection of Main and Port Street, this marina could offer short-term boat parking that greatly improves boat access to Downtown.

In the short-term, the City should coordinate with existing private marinas within Downtown to explore the possibility of public-private partnerships that offer temporary spaces for public boat parking during the summer months. Additionally, the City should explore pedestrian improvements and transit options to better connect Downtown to the City's West Basin Marina, located north of the river.





RIVERFRONT ACTIVATION

To compliment boat access, the City should also better activate areas along the St. Joseph River, with a focus on the Arboretum and the riverfront east of Main Street and north of the County Courthouse property. Activation of the riverfront should enhance pedestrian connectivity and circulation as well as introduce new outdoor spaces and amenities.

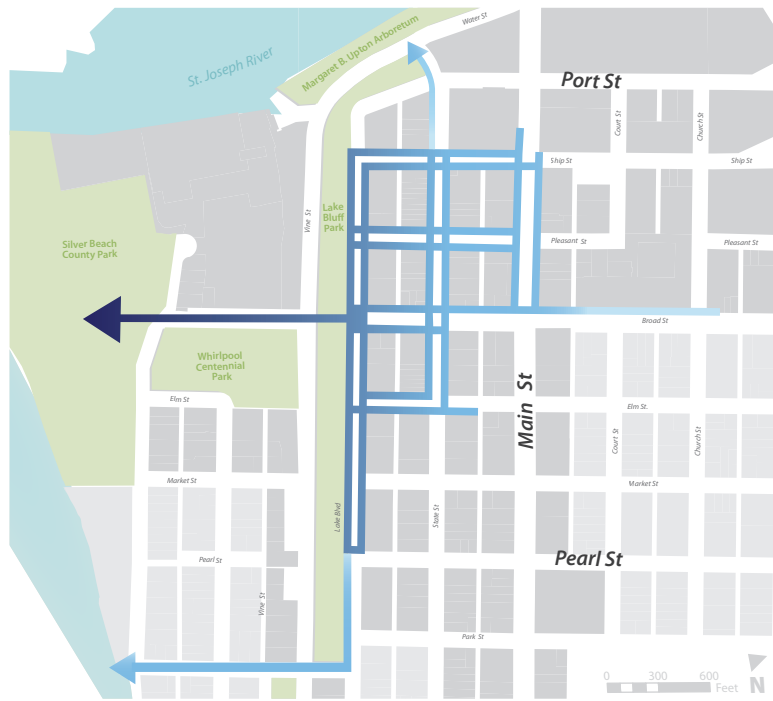
This should include the following recommendations:

- ✱ Develop a continuous path along the St. Joseph River with access to adjacent uses, including connections to the County Courthouse, Main Street, and Wayne Street.
- ✱ Work with property owners and the Army Corps of Engineers to explore the development of a boardwalk or trail connections west from the Arboretum to Silver Beach along the river.
- ✱ Coordinate with the private marina located along the Morrison Channel east of the Wayne Street Bridge to consider development of a riverfront trail or pathway, connecting south to Kiwanis Park and along the river to the City Limits.
- ✱ Formalize the area east of Main Street and north of the County Courthouse as a park or community gathering space. This could be incorporated as part of a public marina and include a playground, landscaping, pedestrian amenities, scenic lookouts, and a splash pad similar to the Whirlpool Compass fountain.
- ✱ Coordinate with the Krasl Art Center to place public art along the riverfront in addition to the Arboretum's collection, with an emphasis on interactive and kid-friendly installations.
- ✱ Consider the development of a riverfront café or concession stand in conjunction with the public marina that can be easily accessible by boat. This development should be highly visible from the river to attract boaters to dock at the marina and potentially visit the Downtown.
- ✱ Incorporate the St. Joseph riverfront as part of gateway and wayfinding signage, branding materials, and other marketing efforts that will emphasize its importance as part of Downtown.
- ✱ Coordinate with MDOT and the City of Benton Harbor to explore improvements to Wayne Street Bridge that will make it more pedestrian accessible and enable pedestrian movement between Downtown St. Joseph and Downtown Benton Harbor, connecting along the riverfront.

The Bluff

The bluff and Lake Bluff Park are two other crucial defining factors of the Downtown. Downtown's elevated position above the bluff allows for its renowned picturesque views of Lake Michigan, Silver Beach, the St. Joseph River, and the St. Joseph North Pier Lighthouse. Further, Lake Bluff Park acts as an important community gathering space within Downtown, regularly used for events and activities that take advantage of the beautiful scenery.

Running adjacent to Lake Boulevard from Park Street to State Street, Lake Bluff Park currently contains a pedestrian pathway with public art, sculptures, and memorials. While a critical asset to the Downtown, the park is narrow and linear. Combined with the intense grade change, much of the bluff is too steep to be activated and requires the closure of Lake Boulevard or other streets Downtown to make enough space for most community events.



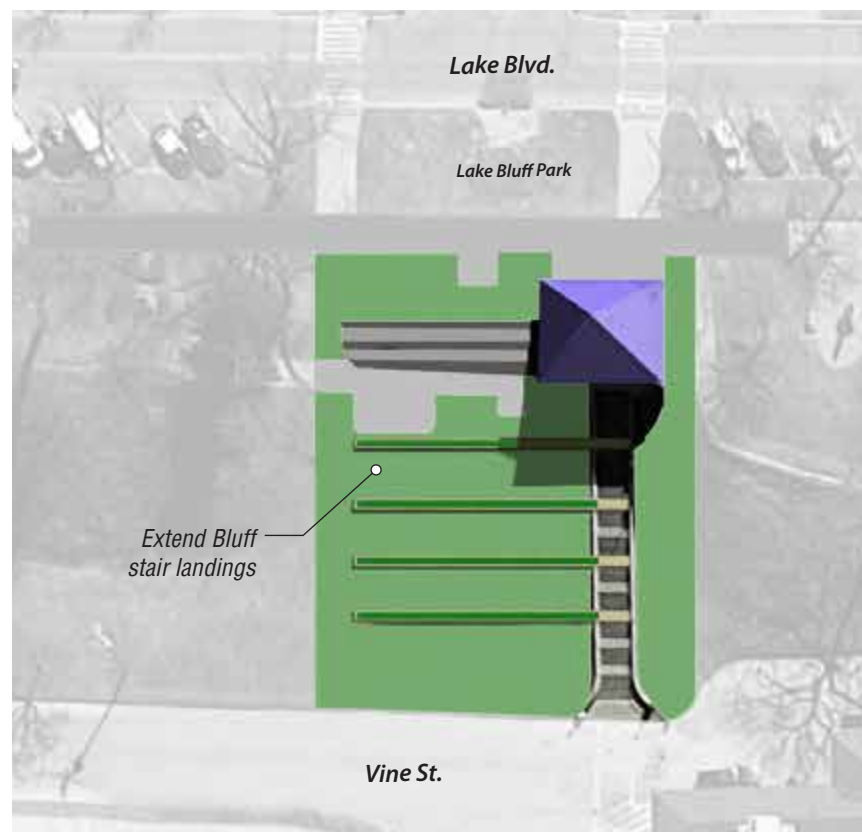
Pedestrian Mobility “Down the Bluff”

 Pedestrian Movement



The City should explore opportunities to better activate the bluff and Lake Bluff Park. One concept that should be considered is to ‘terrace’ the bluff, creating separated tiers of level ground connected by stairways or ramps. These terraced areas could then be programmed in various ways, including seating areas, gardens, playgrounds, public art, and interactive installations. Terracing the bluff would eliminate the steep terrain and provide additional public spaces backdropped by Lake Michigan.

The City should review the feasibility of this project and consider a long-term, multi-phase program. Terracing should be prioritized for areas that have the best views and a high volume of pedestrian activity, such as at the intersection of Lake Boulevard and Broad Street. In the short-term, the City should continue to maintain Lake Bluff Park and explore alternative improvements along the bluff, such as a scenic viewpoint near the John E. N. Howard Bandshell.



Bluff Terracing Concept

Community Gathering Spaces

The creation of additional public spaces was identified as a community priority. Currently, the primary gathering space is Lake Bluff Park; however, State Street also functions as a space for community interaction. The City is also able to close various streets during events to provide additional space, such as the Chalk the Block event that uses a portion of Broad Street for chalk art, or Krasl Art Fair, which uses the full length of Lake Boulevard through Downtown.



The following projects could provide additional open space in Downtown:

- ✧ Development of Opportunity Sites 3 and 4, as identified in the **Land Use & Development Chapter**, would result in two public spaces along Broad Street at Lake Boulevard.
- ✧ Terracing of segments of Lake Bluff Park, which would provide additional programmable space.
- ✧ Improved activation of the St. Joseph Riverfront.
- ✧ Improvements to the plaza at the intersection of Court Street and Pleasant Street. The City should work with the property owners to explore better activation of the area, including pedestrian and bicycle connections to Broad Street.

The City should actively seek the development of these projects to complement and diversify existing community spaces in Downtown. The City should also consider using the public surface parking along Broad Street east of Main Street for event space. Together, these provide an estimated 945,000 square feet, over 20 acres, of readily available community space in Downtown between existing and future spaces. While additional opportunities should be considered, the City should not seek the creation of new open spaces on land that is best prioritized for new development, particularly properties within the Downtown Core. Any new gathering spaces should incorporate pedestrian amenities, public art, playgrounds and activities for families, and other improvements to facilitate social interaction.



Other Entertainment Uses

Downtown is home to a wide variety of other entertainment uses, including attractions like the Silver Beach Carousel, cultural uses like the Krasl Art Center and Curious Kids Museum, and related commercial uses like art galleries and wine tasting rooms. Together, these generate a significant amount of activity and contribute to tourism and excitement in Downtown St. Joseph. Understanding their combined impact on Downtown's vitality and economic success, the City should continue to support these uses and encourage new entertainment options as opportunities arise.

This should include the following strategies:

- ✱ Incorporate entertainment uses as part of promotional and branding efforts for Downtown and St. Joseph overall.
- ✱ Develop informational materials regarding all entertainment uses in Downtown, such as brochures, a self-guided tour, or a map of key destinations and amenities.
- ✱ Work with existing entertainment uses to consider potential partnerships, both with the City and with other uses and businesses in Downtown. For example, restaurants could offer a discount for patrons who visited a museum or attraction in Downtown that day.

Hospitality

There are two hospitality uses in Downtown: the Boulevard Inn and the Silver Beach Hotel. These contribute to tourism and reinforce local entertainment uses, attractions, and businesses. The City should continue to encourage hospitality uses within Downtown and take advantage of opportunities for new uses as they arise. As identified in the **Land Use & Development Chapter**, the City should work with the property owners of the Silver Beach Hotel to explore long-term redevelopment, including a newly constructed hotel. The City should also maintain close communication with existing hospitality uses to address long-term issues that may impact their ability to continue operating Downtown.

Events & Activities

Downtown St. Joseph is host to numerous community events, festivals, and activities throughout the year, including the Krasl Art Fair, Chalk the Block, Antiques on the Bluff, the St. Joseph Farmers Market, March Mannequins, Fall Fest, the Magical Ice Festival, and others. Many of these are organized and managed by St. Joseph Today, a non-profit organization established in 1980 to promote tourism. The quality of existing events in St. Joseph is unmatched within the region and attracts visitors and tourists from around the country to Downtown St. Joseph. The City must maintain these events and ensure they are able to remain within Downtown over time.

This should include the following considerations:

- ✱ Continue to coordinate with St. Joseph Today to organize and host events and activities in Downtown. This should include the regular review of events after they are held to identify and address issues that impacted their operation as well as explore opportunities for new events.
- ✱ Explore the potential of a cuisine-based event or festival, such as a 'Taste of St. Joseph' event, that celebrates local cuisine and restaurants.
- ✱ Coordinate with the Public Works Department and the Public Safety Department to review traffic patterns during events, particularly changes as a result of street closures, and consider new configurations or improvements that will ensure pedestrian safety.
- ✱ Develop materials available online and within Downtown that inform visitors and residents about traffic pattern changes, parking, public restrooms, amenities, scheduled activities, and other information regarding upcoming events and festivals.
- ✱ Ensure all events have a clearly marked information tent where attendees can ask questions or receive information about the event.
- ✱ Conduct regular surveys, both of residents and event attendees, to identify which events are most successful and potential improvements that could be implemented at future events. An emphasis should be placed on measuring attendance in terms of City residents, area residents, and visitors to establish a consistent understanding of who is frequenting these events.



Entertainment & Activity Framework

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Attractions & Cultural Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Silver Beach County Park 2 Silver Beach Carousel & Curious Kids Museum Discovery Zone 5 Krasl Art Center 6 Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library 8 Curious Kids' Museum 12 Heritage Museum & Culture Center 14 Box Factory for the Arts | <p>Hospitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 The Boulevard Inn 11 Silver Beach Hotel <p>Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Whirlpool Centennial Park 4 Lions Park 9 Lake Bluff Park 10 Margaret B. Upton Arboretum 13 Point Park 15 Kiwanis Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential/ Improved Open Space & Public Plazas Lower Broad Pedestrian Experiential Improvements Bluff Terracing Programmable Public Parking Programmable Public Streets Public Transient Marina Water Taxi/ Public Moorings Boat Movement |
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CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is essential to converting the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan into physical change and action within Downtown St. Joseph. This process will require the cooperation of City staff, public officials, partner agencies, the local business community, property owners, developers, and residents. This chapter provides tools and strategies to assist with achieving the community's vision for Downtown and meet the goals and objectives of the Master Plan. This includes an action plan to guide next steps in the planning process, potential funding sources, performance metrics to measure implementation, and an Implementation Action Matrix which reviews and provides direction on all recommendations made throughout the plan.

Action Plan

The Action Plan establishes next steps by which the City can begin implementation and continue momentum to affect positive change in Downtown St. Joseph. These strategies are intended to ensure the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan is integrated with day-to-day planning and policy decisions for the City. Further, they assist with implementation of core recommendations and projects over the life of the plan.

USE THE PLAN DAILY

The St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan should be used on a day-to-day basis, acting as the official policy guide for land use, development, and reinvestment in Downtown. The Plan should be regularly consulted by City staff, City Council, boards, and commissions to review and evaluate proposals for improvement and development within Downtown St. Joseph. Further, the various service providers, employers, community organizations, and institutions of Downtown St. Joseph should utilize the Plan to guide facilities, infrastructure, and programming.

To further educate the community about the Plan, the City should:

- ✦ Make the Plan available online for free, provide hard copies at City Hall, and have a copy on file at the Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library for reference;
- ✦ Provide assistance to the public that explains the intent of the Plan and its relationship to private and public development projects and other civic proposals, as appropriate;
- ✦ Assist the City Council and various boards and commissions in the day-to-day administration, interpretation, and application of the Plan;
- ✦ Provide an overview of the Downtown Master Plan for newly elected or appointed officials to make them familiar with the direction and core concepts of the Plan;
- ✦ Maintain a list of current possible amendments, issues, or needs which may be a subject of change, addition, or deletion from the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan.

FORM AN IMPLEMENTATION ACTION COMMITTEE

As a first step toward implementation, The City should form an Implementation Action Committee. This group would perform in an advisory role, charged with ensuring the Downtown Master Plan is implemented and continues to reflect the City's vision for Downtown. The Committee would meet at specific times throughout the year to review the Plan, discuss completed projects, and identify opportunities for additional implementation. The findings of these meetings would then be turned over to appropriate staff to direct implementation.

This should include prioritized actions that are reflective of both the Plan's goals and objectives as well as conditions that may have changed since the Plan's development. In this way, the Committee will guarantee that action items are responsive to City finances, economic development, and implementation progress. The Committee should be comprised of a mix of community volunteers and key City staff, and could include members of the Downtown Plan Steering Committee, the Downtown Development Authority, St. Joseph Today, and other institutions and service providers in Downtown.

INTEGRATE WITH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

Coordination of financial resources will be essential to implementation of the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan. This will allow for capital investment to be carefully and effectively organized, accounting for both short- and long-term objectives as well as strategic budgeting and project prioritization. The common funding cycle for significant projects can span over multiple years due to the various phases necessary for design and construction. Reviewing project needs will enable the City to plan appropriately for funding requirements and spread out costs to reduce the economic burden.

The City should review and integrate the Downtown Master Plan with capital improvement processes, including the City's annual budgeting process and updating the City's Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Intended to compliment annual budgeting, CIPs review, establish priorities, and schedule desired capital investment projects. Coordinating projects with the CIP will help organize funding resources within St. Joseph and assist with long-term implementation of the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan.

DEVELOP & MAINTAIN PARTNERSHIPS

For the Downtown Master Plan to be successful, there must be strong and steady leadership from the City of St. Joseph supported by partnerships with other public agencies, local institutions, community groups and organizations, the local business community, and the private sector. The City should assume a leadership role to cooperate and coordinate with St. Joseph Today, Berrien County, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Maud Preston Palenske Memorial Library, Krasl Art Center, and other partner organizations and service providers.

In addition, the City should actively work with and encourage developers and the business community to undertake improvements discussed within the Plan to improve the character of Downtown. Working with this diverse range of organizations and groups will help ensure successful implementation of the Plan, support continued revitalization and improvement within Downtown, and create a foundation of cooperation that will support Downtown and the St. Joseph community in the future.

MAINTAIN PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

The St. Joseph Downtown Vision planning process has facilitated considerable public outreach and engagement. This included workshops, the project website, interactive online tools, newsletters and flyers, activities at Downtown events, and other media to keep members of the community involved and informed of the Plan's development.

Building on these efforts, the City should ensure that the Plan's major recommendations and overall "vision" are conveyed to the entire community. This should include regular updates, coverage of major milestones, and providing additional opportunities for residents to voice their opinion.

The City should further develop avenues by which community members can communicate with the City and receive information about local planning and development. This should include ways for resident questions and concerns to be heard and addressed in a timely manner. In addition, the City should work to provide accessible materials both online and in print that simplify and explain regular civic functions. This could include informational materials that provide guidance on applying for zoning, building, subdivision, or other development related permits and approvals.

UPDATE REGULARLY

The St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan is not a static document; it is the beginning of a continuous planning process for Downtown St. Joseph. The Master Plan should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect changes in Downtown and implementation as it occurs. The need for Plan updates are the result of many community influences. Most frequently these are brought about by changes in attitudes or emerging needs not foreseen at the time of Plan adoption.

Although a proposal to update the Plan can be brought forth by petition at any time, the City should regularly undertake a systematic review of the Plan. Although an annual review is desirable, the City should initiate review of the Plan at least every two to three years. Ideally, this review should coincide with the preparation of the annual budget and community investment program. In this manner, recommendations or changes relating to capital improvements or other programs can be considered as part of the upcoming commitments for the fiscal year. Routine examination of the Plan will help ensure that the planning program remains relevant to community needs and aspirations.

Potential Funding Sources

A description of potential funding sources currently available to the City and its partners for implementation is summarized below. As the following funding sources and streams are subject to change over time, it is important to continue to research and monitor grants, funding agencies, and programs to identify new opportunities as they become available.

GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), originating from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, are administered by the Michigan Strategic Fund through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). They are used by municipalities to help private, for-profit businesses locate or expand in their community. Examples of funded projects include extending utility lines to an expanding company that will create new local jobs. They can also be used for critical infrastructure needs in low- and moderate-income communities.

CDBG require matching funds by either the benefiting business or the municipality. Each year, Michigan receives approximately \$30 million in federal CDBG funds, supporting projects throughout the state via several grant programs.

Community Development Financial Institutions Fund

The Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund allocates New Market Tax Credits to Community Development Entities (CDEs) to attract private investment to low-income communities. The CDFI Fund is administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury. Investments made by CDEs may be for the purposes of residential, commercial, industrial, and retail real estate development projects.

Downtown Infrastructure Grants

The Downtown Infrastructure Program, offered by MEDC, is available to improve infrastructure quality and reduce costs to make projects feasible. Only improvements related to new commercial or mixed use developments are eligible. Activities may include the demolition necessary to make other improvements, but all projects must be publicly-owned and maintained, unless the utility is privately-owned.

Foundation & Specialized Grants

The successful implementation of the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan requires realization of projects that range in scale and scope. Foundation and other forms of specialized grants can help provide funding for projects that meet necessary specifications and represent the desired direction or vision of the backing organization. The City should continue to dedicate resources to monitoring and exploring foundation and specialized grants as a funding tool.

Public Spaces Community Places (PSCP)

Public Spaces Community Places is a grant match program administered by MEDC Development Corporation that utilizes donation-based crowdfunding to generate public interest and raise funding to revitalize or create public spaces. By utilizing web-based donations, projects are accessible to anyone willing to make a donation in real time. This crowdgranting model engages the public as each person plays a part in achieving community improvements, and instills community pride as residents become invested in their surroundings.

INCENTIVES

The following is a list of incentives and related programs which can be used to encourage investment in Downtown St. Joseph from the private sector. While sharing the same goal as those funding sources previously identified, incentives provide a means to support projects that further the vision of the Downtown Master Plan in collaboration with businesses, investors, property owners, and other community stakeholders.

Façade Improvement Grants

Façade Improvement Programs provide funding for commercial and mixed-use building façade rehabilitation and reconstruction. The goal of these programs is to reduce the deterioration of traditional downtowns, assuming that exterior improvements will stimulate additional investment in the area and attract additional customers.

Signature Building Acquisition Grants

The Signature Building Acquisition Program, offered by MEDC, funds the acquisition and rehabilitation of vacant and underutilized buildings in downtown districts. Municipalities may also contribute funding to acquisition, allowing developers to lower overall project costs. It is expected that the developer will spend at least the amount of the acquisition cost to improve the building's interior.

Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT)

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) allows the City to reduce the property tax burden of a desired business for a predetermined period. In this instance, a local taxing body and a property owner will agree to the annual payment of a set fee in place of the property taxes. Payments are typically made in the form of a fixed sum, but they may also be paid as a percentage of the income generated by a property.

In addition, PILOT can also be a means of reducing the fiscal impact on the City of a nonprofit, institutional use, or other non-taxpaying entity locating to a key site. While such uses can be desirable as activity generators, they can also negatively impact municipal services. Provisions can be made to offset that negative impact by allowing the City to be compensated for at least a portion of the revenue that would otherwise be collected in the form of property tax.

Tax Exemptions

There are a number of exemptions allowed by the Michigan Department of the Treasury to assist businesses in the state wishing to improve their physical assets. Examples include New Personal Property Exemptions (affords a 100% property tax exemption for specific businesses located within eligible distressed communities) or Industrial Facilities Exemptions (provides a tax incentive to manufacturers to enable renovation and expansion of aging facilities, assist in the building of new facilities, and to promote the establishment of high tech facilities). The City should review and consider exemptions that may be applicable as part of development opportunities in Downtown St. Joseph.

Tax Incentives For Preserving Historic Properties

The National Park Service and Internal Revenue Service, in cooperation with State Historic Preservation Offices, offer Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives to encourage private sector investment in the rehabilitation and re-use of historic buildings. Since the program's founding in 1976, over \$62 billion in private investment has preserved 38,000 historic properties.

Economic Development Planning Grants

Under the Planning and Local Technical Assistance program, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) assists states, counties, municipalities, and educational institutions in drafting economic development plans. The plans should be regional in scope, targeted to guide the economic development efforts of a community or region. The EDA also supports Partnership Planning investments that fund the development, implementation, revision, or replacement of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), which describe and prioritize regional strategic economic goals.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Fixing American's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

The FAST Act, a five-year transportation reauthorization bill, was established in December 2015 as a replacement for the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act. The FAST Act, which is implemented and administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), aims to improve infrastructure, provide long-term certainty and increased flexibility for states and local governments, streamline project approval processes, and encourage innovation to make the surface transportation system safer and more efficient. It authorizes \$305 billion through 2020 for highways, vehicle safety, motor carrier safety, rail, public transportation, hazardous materials safety, and technology, research, and statistics programs.

Safe Routes To School (SRTS)

The Safe Routes to School program has provided funding for various infrastructure-related projects including the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bike to school, including:

- ✱ Sidewalk improvements;
- ✱ Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements;
- ✱ Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements;
- ✱ On-street bicycle facilities;
- ✱ Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- ✱ Secure bicycle parking facilities; and,
- ✱ Traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools.

Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)

The CMAQ program focuses on projects that provide solutions to regional congestion and air quality problems. Eligible project types have included transit improvements, commuter parking lots, traffic flow improvements, bicycle/pedestrian projects and projects that result in emissions reductions. In the past, these projects have been federally funded at 80 percent of project costs.

Michigan Department of Transportation Category A

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), under the mission of maintaining the state's transportation network, administers the Economic Development Fund – Category A, designed to promote increased economic potential and improve the quality of life through support of job creation and retention in Michigan. County road commissions and municipal street agencies can receive up to 80% of costs for transportation projects that will lead to private sector job creation. The project must be related to agriculture or food processing, tourism, forestry, high technology research, manufacturing, mining, or office centers of 50,000 sq. ft. or more.

PARKS, TRAILS & OPEN SPACES

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) administers a variety of grant programs to help municipalities and other local agencies provide public outdoor recreational areas and facilities. The following are specific grant programs which the City could utilize to implement parks, trails, and open space related recommendations of the Master Plan. It should be noted that this list does not include all grant programs offered by MDNR, but only those deemed most relevant.

Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund grants are available to municipalities, counties, and school districts to be used for outdoor recreation projects. Projects require a 50% match. All funded projects are taken under perpetuity by the National Park Service and must only be used for outdoor recreational purposes.

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund provides funding for the purchase of land for resource protection and public outdoor recreation as well as the development of outdoor recreation facilities. Development projects can range from \$15,000 to \$300,000 but there is no limit to grants for land acquisition.

Recreation Passport Grants (RPG)

Recreation Passport Grants are supported by the sales of the state Recreation Passport, which is required for entrance into state parks, recreation areas, and boating access sites. Grants are available to local units of government for development of public recreation facilities. The program is primarily focused on renovation and improvement to existing parks; however, projects for the development of new parks are eligible.

Recreation Improvement Fund Grants (RIFG)

Recreation Improvement Fund Grants provide funding for the maintenance and development of recreation trails, restoration of lands damaged by off-road vehicles, and inland lake cleanup. This program is internal to MDNR, thus local governments must partner with a division of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to be eligible.

Recreational Trails Program Grants (RTPG)

Recreational Trails Program Grants provide funding for maintenance and development of recreational trails and related facilities. Similar to Recreation Improvement Fund Grants, this program is an internal process and local governments must partner with a state division to receive funding for a project.

Redevelopment Ready Community

The Redevelopment Ready Communities Program is a statewide certification program run by MEDC that helps communities become development-ready and competitive in today's economy. There is a formal certification program to ensure well-defined development procedures, a community supported vision, an open and predictable review process, and compelling sites for developers to locate their latest projects. The Program encourages communities to take a proactive approach to identifying and preparing properties to be redeveloped.

The St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan supports the City's vision to be a Redevelopment Ready Community. The plan identifies numerous properties that are ready or easily available for development and redevelopment. The development opportunity sites identified in Chapter 4: Land Use & Development outlines existing conditions and potential development concepts to support long-term redevelopment and reinvestment in Downtown St. Joseph.

Implementation Action Matrix

The St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan includes numerous recommended policies, projects, and strategies. The following Implementation Action Matrix identifies the key actions that can be undertaken to achieve the community's vision for Downtown St. Joseph. The City should use this Matrix to assign tasks to various departments, explore strategic partnerships, and identify funding sources relevant to each action. As actions are completed and the Plan is updated, the matrix should be revised to prioritize the remaining actions and add new ones as needed.

The Implementation Action Matrix provides a brief description of each recommendation or action along with the following:

- ✱ City Action – The action that should be taken by the City of St. Joseph to begin implementation of that recommendation.
- ✱ Potential Partner – Agencies, organizations, service providers, and institutions that the City should coordinate with to implement that recommendations.
- ✱ Potential Funding – Potential sources of funding that could be obtained to enable implementation of the project or action.

Chapter 3: Land Use & Development

RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
FUNCTIONAL DOWNTOWN SUBAREAS				
3.1	Encourage and promote the development of preferred uses as identified for each functional subarea within Downtown.	Review and update the City's Zoning Ordinance to allow preferred uses.	Downtown Development Authority (DDA)	
		Work with property owners to actively seek the development of preferred uses on viable properties.	DDA	CDBG, CDFI Fund
3.2	Coordinate with developers and property owners to foster the desired character and built form as identified for each functional subarea within Downtown.	Review and update the City's Zoning Ordinance to ensure future development is consistent with desired character and built form.	DDA	
		Work with property owners and developers to ensure future development contributes to the desired character of each functional subarea.	DDA	
3.3	Encourage mixed-use development in appropriate functional subareas that contributes to activity and excitement along the sidewalks and streets.	Work with property owners and the development community to actively seek mixed-use development on viable properties.	DDA	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
3.4	Continue to support the East Main Campus Subarea as an employment hub within the community.	Work with the development community to ensure that office and employment uses are maintained and integrated as development occurs.	DDA, Berrien County	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
		Encourage and consider possible incentives for development that includes office and employment spaces.	DDA, Berrien County	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
3.5	Encourage appropriate restaurant, retail, service, and higher density residential in the East Main Campus Subarea.	Promote the East Main Campus Subarea as a desired location for these uses.	DDA, Berrien County	
		Work with property owners to actively seek development of these uses, building upon the existing uses along Pleasant Street and Court Street.	DDA, Berrien County	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
3.6	Renew emphasis on the pedestrian realm and experience in the East Main Campus Subarea.	Enhance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and related amenities through streetscaping improvements.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
		Consider the pedestrian experience and built form as part of the review process for future development projects.	DDA	
3.7	Preserve the residential character and picturesque neighborhood of the Residential Transition Subarea.	Carefully review future development projects with consideration for the character of the area and adjacent uses.	DDA	
		Explore local and national historic designations for structures of significance in the subarea.	DDA	Signature Building Acquisition Grants, Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties
3.8	Prioritize urban design and pedestrian environment improvements along the sidewalk and surrounding areas between Silver Beach and the lakefront and the steps leading down the bluff from the Downtown Core.	Plan and execute urban design and pedestrian improvements in the identified areas.	DDA	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
3.9	Allow both residential and commercial uses along South Main Street, occupying part or all of the structure, while retaining a residential neighborhood character.	Review and update zoning along Main Street south of Elm Street to allow residential and commercial uses on all floors of a structure.	DDA	

Chapter 3: Land Use & Development

RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
3.10	Improve the streetscape of Broad Street and the appearance of properties within the Broad Street Approach subarea.	Plan and execute streetscaping improvements along Broad Street.	DDA	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
		Work with property owners to encourage and incentivize improvements that will enhance the character of their properties.	DDA	Façade Improvement Grants, Tax Exemptions
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES				
3.11	Explore and encourage appropriate development of the identified opportunity sites.	Consider selling City-owned properties to enable desired development Downtown.	DDA	
		Coordinate with property owners and developers to explore and actively seek development that will contribute to the character and vitality of Downtown.	DDA	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
3.12	Improve the character and experience along the Lake Boulevard eastern frontage.	Screen public parking lots along Lake Boulevard; Sell City-owned properties and coordinate with developers to seek infill development that will create a consistent building streetwall.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
3.13	Develop the northeast and southeast corners of Lake Boulevard and Broad Street as pedestrian plazas that provide public gather spaces while protecting valued viewsheds of Lake Michigan.	Coordinate with the property owner of the southeast corner to consider purchasing the property or a land swap with the City-owned property to the south.	DDA	
		Plan and complete development of pedestrian plazas.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
3.14	Regulate the height of buildings along Lake Boulevard north and south of Broad Street to protect viewsheds of Lake Michigan.	Review and update zoning to require considerations for viewsheds in development of these properties.	DDA	
		Work with developers to incorporate the desired setbacks within design of future development projects.	DDA	
3.15	Encourage redevelopment of the Silver Beach Hotel property, which could include a new hotel, a parking garage, and mixed-use buildings.	Coordinate with the property owners and potential developers to consider long-term redevelopment of the property and explore potential public-private partnerships for the project.	DDA	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
3.16	Encourage development of the Berrien County Courthouse's surface parking at Main Street and Port Street, which could include commercial, multi-family residential, or mixed-use buildings as well as riverfront access.	Meet with the County to discuss this development concept, potential partnerships with the City, and other details for this potential project.	Berrien County, DDA	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
3.17	Encourage redevelopment of the Commercial Shopping Center southeast of Main Street and Port Street, which could include a mix of commercial, office, and multifamily uses as well as mixed-use buildings.	Coordinate with the property owners and potential developers to consider long-term redevelopment of the property and explore potential public-private partnerships for the project.	DDA	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
3.18	Coordinate with the County to construct a parking garage on the site of its existing surface parking lot at Port Street and Ship Street	Meet with the County to discuss this development concept, potential partnerships with the City, and other details for this potential project.	Berrien County, DDA	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions

Chapter 4: Parking & Transportation

RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
TRAFFIC ACCESS & CIRCULATION				
4.1	Decrease queuing outside Silver Beach and improve related congestion	Coordinate with the county to explore new strategies and improvements, such as automated parking access equipment and traffic control practices.	Berrien County, Cornerstone Alliance	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
4.2	Maintain close communication with MDOT to discuss potential improvements, maintenance concerns, and other issues for MDOT controlled roadways.	Hold regular meetings with MDOT to discuss desired improvements and potential partnerships	MDOT, DDA	
4.3	Improve boat access to enable boating visitors to more easily travel Downtown and better connect St. Joseph with its defining waterways.	Work with the Army Corps of Engineers to identify potential locations for a public marina and boat moorings.	Army Corps of Engineers	LWCF, MNRTF, RPG
		Coordinate with private marinas in Downtown to explore offering temporary spaces for public boat parking.		
		Explore pedestrian improvements, transit options, and water taxis to better connect Downtown to the City's West Basin Marina	Army Corps of Engineers	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
4.4	Promote rail access as part of Downtown tourism throughout the year.	Incorporate rail access as a component of tourism and branding efforts.	Amtrak	
		Consider partnership opportunities, such as promotional deals for those who travel to Downtown via Amtrak.	Amtrak	
PARKING IN DOWNTOWN				
4.5	Ensure parking Downtown is accessible to people with disabilities.	Inventory the number and location of designated accessible parking spaces.	DDA	
		Add new designated accessible parking spaces where needed.	DDA	
4.6	Ensure parking requirements will yield necessary parking as part of Development in Downtown.	Consider reducing parking requirements for multi-family, retail, and personal services.	DDA	
		Consider changes to overnight parking regulations to accommodate resident overnight use of public parking in a designated lot.	DDA	
4.7	Use the City's enforcement technology data to monitor parking demand and utilization.	Develop monthly parking dashboards to inform parking rate increases and decreases, enforcement routes, and other parking and mobility decisions and policies.		
4.8	Explore a paid parking strategy to manage parking demand and generate appropriate parking turnover Downtown.	Develop a pilot paid parking strategy or program, to be reviewed and updated at identified intervals based on the success of guiding parking demand within Downtown.	DDA	
		Establish a parking benefits district.	DDA	
4.9	Implement Transportation Demand Management best practices in Downtown	Initiate shared parking agreements to balance parking demand in Downtown St. Joseph.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Seek lease agreements with the owners of certain key facilities to make them available for public parking during the peak summer demand.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A

Chapter 4: Parking & Transportation

RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
4.9	Implement Transportation Demand Management best practices in Downtown	Create a robust parking signage and wayfinding program for publicly available parking facilities.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Explore technology that will inform drivers of the availability of parking spaces at different facilities.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Create a parking information page on the City's website that provide information to drivers ahead of time that will inform their routes to Downtown.		
		Identify specific public lots where Downtown employees should park and discourage employees from parking in on-street spaces north of Elm Street and west of Main Street.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
		Investigate providing remote parking and shuttle services on an as needed basis.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Consider providing a seasonal shuttle service on the perimeter of Downtown to connect major destinations with underutilized parking facilities.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Explore developing a fee in lieu of parking program for new development within the State Street Downtown Core and East Main Campus Subarea.	DDA	
4.10	Embrace emerging technologies that will improve parking facilities and amenities.	Regularly check resources to ensure the City is up to date on recommended parking requirements for Autonomous Vehicles.	DDA	
		Explore improvements to existing and future parking facilities that will support electric vehicles.	DDA	
4.11	Consider the construction of parking garages in Downtown to consolidate parking vertically.	Explore the design and cost of public parking garages in locations identified within Downtown.	DDA	
		Coordinate with Berrien County to encourage the development of a new parking garage for the County Courthouse.	Berrien County	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
		Prepare and sell the City-owned public surface lots that have been targeted for potential infill.	DDA	CDBG, CDFI Fund, PILOT, Tax Exemptions
PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE MOBILITY				
4.12	Continue to invest in capital improvements, infrastructure updates, and grant programs to enhance pedestrian mobility.	Develop a city-wide active transportation plan, with emphasis given to Downtown and Silver Beach	DDA	
		Coordinate with adjacent municipalities to explore development of a regional active transportation plan.	Berrien County, City of Benton Harbor, St. Joseph Township, Cornerstone Alliance	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A

Chapter 4: Parking & Transportation

RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
4.13	Foster a consistent, high quality pedestrian experience throughout Downtown with emphasis on the identified priority pedestrian corridors.	Buffer pedestrians from car movement	DDA, MDOT	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Continue to budget for regular sidewalk maintenance in Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.		FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Maintain a six-foot unobstructed walking zone for sidewalks throughout the Downtown.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
		Review and consider necessary sidewalk expansions as part of capital improvement and streetscaping projects.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Continue to use sidewalk bump-outs to expand the pedestrian realm and provide space for additional amenities.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, MDOT	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Review intersection design throughout Downtown to identify potential improvements that will increase safety and comfort for pedestrians.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, MDOT	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Improve all intersections in Downtown with high visibility crosswalks and are regularly maintained	DDA, St. Joseph Today, MDOT	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
4.14	Provide bicycle infrastructure and related amenities that will enable cyclists to travel to and spend time Downtown.	Encourage developers to provide bicycle parking for their properties and consider cyclist accessibility.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Develop amenities that support bicycle mobility, such as bicycle repair stations.		CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Continue to be proactive in establishing and expanding trails and bike facilities to connect residential neighborhoods with Downtown and Silver Beach.	MDOT, DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Incorporate on-street bike routes in Downtown utilizing local streets that are low volume and low speed.	MDOT, DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Partner with MDOT to make improvements to the Main Street Bridge that would better support bike mobility.	MDOT, DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
MAIN STREET CORRIDOR				
4.15	Coordinate with MDOT to explore improvements to Main Street that will elevate the corridor as a welcoming gateway that unifies Downtown St. Joseph.	Meet with MDOT to discuss the identified Main Street Improvement Concepts and details such as design, location, engineering, cost, maintenance, and other factors.	MDOT	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A

Chapter 5: Urban Design & Character

Chapter 5: Urban Design & Character				
RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
STREETSCAPING				
5.1	Coordinate improvements to the public realm that will reinforce the character of Downtown in accordance with the identified streetscape tiers.	Plan and execute desired streetscape improvements and projects; Integrate streetscape improvements as part of roadway and infrastructure improvement projects as well as development.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, MDOT	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
STREETWALLS				
5.2	Establish a continuous streetwall throughout the State Street Downtown Core and East Main Campus Subareas.	Work with property owners and developers to ensure the design of future developments contributes to a continuous streetwall.	DDA	
		Provide incentives to screen private parking lots.	DDA, Cornerstone Alliance	PILOT, Tax Exemptions
		Screen City-owned surface parking.	DDA	
		Consider streetscape elements to fill streetwall gaps, such as sculptures or landscaping.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Krasl Art Center	Foundation & Specialized Grants
		Consider zoning code revisions that will eliminate front yard setbacks and move parking to the rear of properties.	DDA	
BROAD STREET PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE				
5.3	Prioritize the Broad Street connection between the Downtown Core and Silver Beach for pedestrian improvements and amenities that foster an active and exciting pedestrian experience.	Explore and implement beautification treatments such as landscaping, flower beds and street trees, unique pavement treatments, lighting, benches, and other amenities.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
		Explore and seek opportunities for unique and interactive experiences to activate the area.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance, Krasl Art Center	Foundation & Specialized Grants
BUILDING FAÇADES & STOREFRONTS				
5.4	Ensure building façades, awnings, storefronts, and signage meet preferred standards and do not detract from the pedestrian experience.	Establish a guide for preferred standards, coordinating with the Downtown Development Authority.	DDA	
		Work with property owners and developers to ensure buildings are attractive in design the entire length and height of the building's front façade.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	Façade Improvement Grants, Tax Exemptions, Foundations & Specialized Grants
		Explore programs to incentivize façade improvements, particularly along State Street.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	Façade Improvement Grants
BUMP OUTS				
5.5	Continue to implement bump outs where appropriate within Downtown.	Explore the feasibility and implement bump outs at all primary and secondary intersections, where right-of-way widths and traffic patterns allow.	DDA, MDOT	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Coordinate with MDOT to implement the identified bump outs along Main Street north of Broad Street.	MDOT, DDA	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A

Chapter 5: Urban Design & Character				
RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
ADA ACCESSIBILITY				
5.6	Ensure the public right-of-way and access to private properties within Downtown is ADA accessible.	Ensure all existing and future sidewalks, curb-ramps, and crosswalks are compliant with ADA standards and Public Rights-Of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).	DDA, MDOT	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Require that all future developments integrate ADA and PROWAG standards.	DDA, MDOT	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
CROSSWALKS				
5.7	Ensure crosswalks are clearly delineated at each intersection to designate the pedestrian space and catch the attention of drivers.	Paint or repaint crosswalks where they are missing or faded and lack visibility	DDA, MDOT	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Incorporate unique or colorful crosswalk designs to increase visibility and foster local identity.	DDA, MDOT	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
STREET FURNISHINGS				
5.8	Provide street furnishings and pedestrian amenities throughout Downtown.	Continue to maintain existing pedestrian amenities including seating, bike racks, trash and recycling receptacles, street lighting, street lighting banners, and information kiosks.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Identify and add new street furnishings to reinforce public gathering spaces and promote outdoor seating areas.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
OUTDOOR DINING				
5.9	Promote opportunities for restaurants to feature outdoor patios and rooftop decks, especially at locations with views of Lake Michigan or the St. Joseph River.	Coordinate with restaurants to identify potential locations for outdoor dining.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
		Ensure the layout and design of outdoor dining does not impact pedestrian circulation	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
SCREENING				
5.10	Ensure unattractive uses are appropriately screened within Downtown.	Review and update zoning regulations to require screening of unattractive uses, including decorative fences, landscaping, and other creative treatments.	DDA	
		Work with property owners and developers to install appropriate screening as part of existing and future developments.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	PILOT, Tax Exemptions
LANDSCAPING				
5.11	Incorporate landscaping throughout Downtown as part of screening and new development.	Review and update zoning regulations to require landscaping, consisting of native, salt-tolerant shade trees, ornamental trees, evergreens, shrubs, groundcover, and perennials.	DDA	PILOT, Tax Exemptions
		Coordinate with property owners and developers to incorporate landscaping as part of existing and future developments.	DDA	PILOT, Tax Exemptions
		Work with MDOT to install landscaped medians at key locations along Main Street north of Broad Street.	MDOT, DDA	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A

Chapter 5: Urban Design & Character

Chapter 5: Urban Design & Character				
RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
VIEWSHEDS				
5.12	Actively protect viewsheds that are critical to the character of Downtown.	Continue to strictly enforce the Lake Bluff Scenic View Protection Overlay District for development below the Bluff.	DDA	
		Update the Lake Bluff Scenic View Protection Overlay District to ensure views are preserved from Lake Street outward and provide a more clearly defined resource for determining maximum permitted heights.	DDA	
		Require appropriate setbacks for properties along Lake Boulevard to preserve views from State Street and prohibit a tunneling affect.	DDA	
		Regulate the height of structures on properties along Lake Boulevard to protect existing views from State Street.	DDA	
GATEWAY FEATURES				
5.13	Install and improve gateway features to prominently mark entry into Downtown St. Joseph.	Construct new gateway features at the identified locations within the Downtown study area.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Review and design of existing gateway features to determine if these should be updated or rebranded.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Improve existing gateway features as necessary to reflect branding changes or the new style of new gateway features.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
WAYFINDING SIGNAGE				
5.14	Maintain and enhance the existing wayfinding system to convey a unified design theme and direct pedestrians and vehicles to community destinations.	Install new wayfinding signage at the identified locations throughout the Downtown study area.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Install directional signage to public parking in Downtown to improve circulation and access to existing parking options.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Install pedestrian wayfinding or maps of Downtown to improve circulation for pedestrians.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants, CMAQ, MDOT Category A

Chapter 5: Urban Design & Character

RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
PUBLIC ART				
5.15	Continue to maintain Downtown's existing public art while seeking opportunities for new installations.	Partner with Krasl Art Center and St. Joseph Today to maintain and expand public art in Downtown.	Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph Today, DDA	Foundation & Specialized Grants
		Explore opportunities for public art that is interactive and encourages the viewer to engage with the installation.	Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph Today, DDA	Foundation & Specialized Grants
		Consider bringing back the previous public art program or establishment of a new public art initiative.	Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph Today, DDA	Foundation & Specialized Grants
5.16	Continue to seek the creation of murals within Downtown, with a focus on entrances of alleys, windowless walls, and sides of buildings.	Coordinate with St. Joseph Today to support their program and the development of additional murals in Downtown.	Krasl Art Center, St. Joseph Today, DDA	Foundation & Specialized Grants
MAINTENANCE & UPKEEP				
5.17	Prioritize maintenance and upkeep to ensure Downtown remains an attractive and desirable destination.	Coordinate with property owners and businesses to ensure continued investment in the maintenance, design, construction, and programming of private property	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
		Continue to identify and address necessary maintenance projects, including potholes, cracked pavement, and worn sidewalk treatments.	MDOT, DDA	FAST Act, SRTS, CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Continue to ensure upkeep of street furniture, amenities, and public landscaping.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
5.18	Work with property owners and businesses to ensure alleys in Downtown are well maintained.	Regularly clean and clear alleys.	DDA	CDBG, CDFI Funds, Downtown Infrastructure Grants
		Standardize the location of trash cans and other amenities in alleys Downtown, requiring screening where appropriate.	DDA	
HISTORIC PRESERVATION				
5.19	Actively seek protection of appropriate historic properties and resources within Downtown	Establish a local historic designation and a register of local historic properties.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties
		Work with property owners to identify eligible properties that could be included on the National Register of Historic Places.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties
		Provide educational resources regarding historic preservation as well as available resources and programs to protect and enhance eligible properties.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	Signature Building Acquisition Grants, Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties
		Support adaptive reuse and façade restoration of historic properties as well as salvaging and reuse of historic and architectural elements in new development.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	Signature Building Acquisition Grants, Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties

Chapter 6: Entertainment & Activity

Chapter 6: Entertainment & Activity				
RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
LAKE MICHIGAN & SILVER BEACH				
6.1	Improve the ease and efficiency of moving down the bluff for pedestrians	Explore and implement opportunities for new pedestrian connections down the bluff.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance, Berrien County	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Explore the opportunity for a walkway down the bluff at Elm Street.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance, Berrien County	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Incorporate pedestrian wayfinding signage that clearly marks routes to and from the beach front area.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A
		Continue to coordinate with Berrien County to identify and address issues and challenges related to the operation of Silver Beach	Berrien County	LWCF, MNRTF, RPG
		Coordinate with Berrien County to identify duplication of services between Silver Beach and City beaches and consider opportunities for partnerships that would make beach access easier for residents and visitors.	Berrien County	LWCF, MNRTF, RPG
6.2	Improve the character of routes between the Downtown Core and Lake Michigan.	Enhance the pedestrian experience by adding street furnishings and decorative elements to routes down the bluff, particularly along Broad Street.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance, Berrien County	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, RTPG
		Upgrade the public restroom facility at the top of the stairs near Lake Boulevard and Broad Street, including a contemporary design and a prominent gateway sign.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, RTPG
THE ST. JOSEPH RIVER				
6.3	Improve boat access along the St. Joseph River	Work with the Army Corps of Engineers to identify potential locations for a public marina and boat moornings.	Army Corps of Engineers	LWCF, MNRTF, RPG
		Coordinate with existing private marinas within Downtown to explore the possibility of public-private partnerships that offer temporary spaces for public boat parking during the summer months.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	
		Explore pedestrian improvements and transit options to better connect Downtown to the City's West Basin Marina, coordinating with MDOT.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
6.4	Better activate areas adjacent to the St. Joseph River	Develop a continuous path along the St. Joseph River with access to adjacent uses.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Work with property owners and the Army Corps of Engineers to explore development of a boardwalk or trail connections west from the Margaret B. Upton Arboretum to Silver Beach along the River.	Army Corps of Engineers, DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG

Chapter 6: Entertainment & Activity

RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
6.4	Better activate areas adjacent to the St. Joseph River	Coordinate with the private marina located along the Morrison Channel east of the Wayne Street Bridge to consider development of a riverfront trail or pathway, connecting south to Kiwanis Park.	Army Corps of Engineers, DDA, St. Joseph Today	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Formalize the area east of Main Street and north of the County Courthouse as a park or community gathering space.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance, Berrien County	LWCF, MNRTF, RPG, RIFG
		Coordinate with the Krasl Art Center to place public art along the Riverfront, with an emphasis on interactive and kid-friendly installations.	Krasl Art Center, DDA, St. Joseph Today	Foundation & Specialized Grants
		Consider the development of a riverfront café or coession stand.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance	
		Incorporate the St. Joseph Riverfront as part of gateway and wayfinding signage, branding materials, and other marketing efforts.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
		Coordinate with MDOT and the City of Benton Harbor to explore improvements to pedestrian mobility on the Wayne Street Bridge.	MDOT, City of Benton Harbor	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
THE BLUFF				
6.5	Explore opportunities to better activate the bluff and Lake Bluff Park	Review the feasibility and consider a long-term, multi-phase program to terrace segments of the bluff.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	LWCF, MNRTF, RPG, RIFG
		Identify and implement alternative improvements along the bluff, such as scenic viewpoints.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	LWCF, MNRTF, RPG, RIFG
COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES				
6.6	Actively seek the development of projects that will compliment and diversify existing community spaces in Downtown.	Seek development of the identified public plazas along Broad Street at Lake Boulevard.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
		Review and implement terracing projects for segments of Lake Bluff Park.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	LWCF, MNRTF, RPG, RIFG
		Improve activation of the St. Joseph Riverfront.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Cornerstone Alliance, Army Corps of Engineers	CMAQ, MDOT Category A, LWCF, MNRTF, RIFG, RTPG
		Work with the property owners to better activate the plaza at the intersection of Court Street and Pleasant Street.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
		Utilize the surface parking along Broad Street east of Main Street as an event space in the future.	St. Joseph Today	

Chapter 6: Entertainment & Activity

RECOMMENDATION		CITY ACTION	POTENTIAL PARTNER	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
OTHER ENTERTAINMENT USES				
6.7	Continue to support entertainment uses and encourage new entertainment options in Downtown as opportunities arise.	Incorporate entertainment uses as part of promotional and branding efforts for Downtown and St. Joseph overall.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Entertainment Uses	
		Develop informational materials regarding all entertainment uses in Downtown.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Entertainment Uses	
		Work with existing uses to consider potential partnerships, both with the City and other uses and businesses in Downtown.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Entertainment Uses	
HOSPITALITY				
6.8	Continue to encourage hospitality uses within Downtown and take advantage of opportunities for new uses as they arise.	Work with property owners of the Silver Beach Hotel to explore long-term redevelopment including a newly constructed hotel.	DDA, St. Joseph Today	
		Maintain close communication with existing hospitality uses to address long-term issues that may impact their ability to continue operating Downtown.	DDA, St. Joseph Today, Hospitality Uses	
EVENTS & ACTIVITIES				
6.9	Maintain events and activities in Downtown and ensure they are able to remain within the area over time.	Continue to coordinate with St. Joseph Today to organize and host events and activities in Downtown.	St. Joseph Today	
		Regularly review events after they are held to identify and address issues that impacted their operation.	St. Joseph Today	
		Coordinate with the Public Works Department and the Public Safety Department to review traffic patterns during events.	St. Joseph Today	
		Develop materials available online and within Downtown that inform visitors and residents about important event information.	St. Joseph Today	
		Ensure all events have a clearly marked information tent where attendees can ask questions or receive information about the event.	St. Joseph Today	
		Conduct regular surveys, both of residents and event attendees, to identify which events are most successful and potential improvements that could be implemented at future events.	St. Joseph Today	Foundation & Specialized Grants
6.10	Explore opportunities for new events and festivals.	Explore potential events and festivals, including research of unique events held in other communities and surveying residents about what new events or activities they would be interested in.	St. Joseph Today	Foundation & Specialized Grants
		Explore the potential of a cuisine-based event or festival that celebrates local cuisine and restaurants.	St. Joseph Today	Foundation & Specialized Grants

Progress Indicators & Benchmarks

As the City seeks implementation, it is essential that staff have the tools to measure progress and analyze success in achieving the central goals and objectives of the Plan. The accompanying Performance Metrics provides staff with potential metrics, desired trends, and proposed data resources which can be used to gauge the success and progress of implementation. These are not intended to establish specific benchmarks or thresholds which signify an objective has been obtained. Rather, the metrics dictates preferred trends that demonstrate positive change while encouraging continued improvement over the life of the Plan. Metrics and trends are directly tied to the specific goals and objectives of the St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan.

Goal #1- Reinforce Downtown's distinct character and sense of place while accommodating desirable infill development.

Potential Metrics	Desired Trend	Proposed Data Resources
Total square footage of new development within Downtown	Increase in square footage	City databases
Total private investment within Downtown	Increase in private funds invested	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Number of public/private development partnerships	Increase in partnerships	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Number of public amenities developed as part of private development	Increase in public amenities	City databases
Public opinion of new development within Downtown	Positive response to new development	Survey of residents, visitors, business community
Number of viewpoints for key views and vistas within Downtown	Maintain and increase number of viewpoints, as appropriate	City databases
Public opinion of pedestrian experience Downtown	Positive public opinion	Survey of residents, visitors, business community
Number of Downtown streets where pedestrians do not feel safe and comfortable	Decrease number of streets or eliminate	Survey of residents, visitors, business community
Number of public art installations	Increase in public art	City databases, Krasl Art Center
Number of historically designated properties	Establishment of local historic designation and register, Increase in properties on local and national historic registers	City databases, National Register of Historic Places, Berrien County
Number of gateway features that define entry into Downtown	Increase in gateway features	City databases

Goal #2- Strengthen Downtown as a vibrant and active year-round mixed-use district.

Potential Metrics	Desired Trend	Proposed Data Resources
Number of partnerships with public and semi-public facilities within Downtown	Increase in number of partnerships	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Number of residents living within Downtown	Increase in number of residents	City databases
Number of housing units within Downtown	Increase in housing units	City databases
Total square footage of commercial space within Downtown	Maintain or increase in square footage	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Number of entertainment uses within Downtown	Maintain or increase number of uses	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Number of year-round businesses within Downtown	Increase in year-round businesses	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Diversity of businesses within Downtown	Increase in number of businesses from new industry sectors	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Number of restaurants within Downtown	Increase in number of restaurants	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Number of individuals employed within Downtown	Maintain or increase individuals employed	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Total square footage of mixed-use development	Increase in square footage	City databases, St. Joseph Today
Number of first-floor residential and office uses	Decrease in number of uses	City databases

Goal #3- Make getting around Downtown easy, safe, and efficient for all modes of transportation.

Potential Metrics	Desired Trend	Proposed Data Resources
Public opinion of parking, specifically ease and availability	Positive opinion	Survey of residents and visitors
Number of parking lots exceeding 90 percent utilization during the summer season	Decrease in number	City databases, Berrien County
Congestion of automobile traffic within Downtown	Decrease in stacking, queuing, backup of traffic	City databases, MDOT, Berrien County
Number of Downtown streets where pedestrians do not feel safe and comfortable	Decrease number of streets or eliminate	Survey of residents, visitors, business community
Public perception of safety when crossing Main Street	Increase in feeling of safety	Survey of residents and visitors
Number of intersections with unmarked or deteriorated crosswalks	Decrease or eliminate intersections	City databases, MDOT
Number of publically available bicycle amenities within Downtown	Increase in bicycle amenities	City databases
Access between Downtown and adjacent areas	Increase in routes and transportation options	City databases
Number of gateway and wayfinding signs within Downtown	Increase in number of signs	City databases

Goal #4- Leverage proximity to Lake Michigan, the St. Joseph River, Silver Beach, and other nearby recreation and environmental assets.

Potential Metrics	Desired Trend	Proposed Data Resources
Pedestrian routes between Downtown Core and Beach Front Area	Increase in number of pedestrian routes	City databases
Public perception of distance between Downtown and Silver Beach	Decrease in perception that these areas are too distant	Survey of residents and visitors
Improved boat access to Downtown	Increase in number of slips and docks with access to Downtown; establishment of public ferry or water taxi along St. Joseph River	City databases
Linear feet of trails within Downtown	Increase in linear feet of trail	City databases
Number of access points to the St. Joseph Riverfront	Increase in number of access points	City databases
Square footage of Lake Bluff Park that is activated and programmable	Increase in square footage	City databases
Number of viewpoints for key views and vistas within Downtown	Maintain and increase number of viewpoints, as appropriate	City databases

Goal #5- Enhance the events, festivals, and outdoor community gathering opportunities in Downtown.

Potential Metrics	Desired Trend	Proposed Data Resources
Attendance at community events	Maintain and increase as appropriate	St. Joseph Today
Public perception of community events	Positive perception	Survey of residents, visitors, and event attendees
Number of community events held within Downtown annually	Maintain and increase as appropriate	St. Joseph Today
Public perception of parking during events	Perception that parking is easy relative to the volume of traffic during events	Survey of residents, visitors, and event attendees
Number of activated public plazas and community spaces	Increase number of plazas and spaces	City databases
Attendance at non-summer season community events	Increase attendance	St. Joseph Today
Total square footage of programmable public space within Downtown	Increase square footage to meet needs of community	City databases